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Transamerican Literary Relations and the Nineteenth-Century Public Sphere

Anna Brickhouse



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TRANSAMERICAN LITERARY RELATIONS AND THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY PUBLIC SPHERE

This wide-ranging comparative study argues for a fundamental reassessment of the literary history of the nineteenth-century United States within the transamerican and multilingual contexts that shaped it. Drawing on an array of texts in English, French, and Spanish by both canonical and neglected writers and activists, Anna Brickhouse investigates interactions between US, Latin American, and Caribbean literatures. Her many examples and case studies include the Mexican genealogies of Nathaniel Hawthorne, the rewriting of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by a Haitian dramatist, and a French Caribbean translation of the poetry of Phillis Wheatley. Brickhouse uncovers lines of literary influence and descent linking Philadelphia and Havana, Port-au-Prince and Boston, Paris and New Orleans. She argues for a new understanding of this most formative period of literary production in the United States as a "transamerican renaissance," a rich era of literary border crossing and transcontinental cultural exchange. This innovative and important contribution will open up new directions in the field of American literary studies.

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PUBLIC SPHERE

ANNA BRICKHOUSE

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University of Colorado at Boulder*



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Note on texts and translations

In quoting from French and Spanish sources, I have retained the original nineteenth-century orthography, in some cases unconventional even in its own moment, with no alteration. All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated; where they do appear, the inclusion of foreign-language quotations (whether a single word, a key phrase, or an entire passage or poem) has been determined by the context of the surrounding argument or the necessity of illustrating certain points with reference to the original.

Prologue

A great soldier and patriot, Simón Bolívar serves as an inspiration to all the peoples of the western hemisphere. Through turbulent and frustrating times, he had the vision to see that the unity of the Americas could be achieved . . . Bolívar's letter from Jamaica on September 6, 1815, poignantly expressed his dream of a union "with a single bond that unites its parts among themselves and to the whole." With this aim in mind, he convoked the Congress of Panama in 1826, which signaled a decisive step toward the system of cooperation we enjoy today . . . On this occasion, we in the United States join with our hemispheric friends to remember the great hero whose ideals bind us closer together. Bolívar, more than any other figure in the history of the western hemisphere, understood that, while we are citizens of separate countries, we are members of one family in the new world – we are Americans.

So proclaimed Ronald Reagan when he designated July 24, 1983 through July 23, 1984 as the "Bicentennial Year of the Birth of Simón Bolívar, hero of the independence of the Americas."¹ From the perspective of nearly twenty years, of course, the proclamation is rife with political ironies, beginning with the US invasion of Grenada the following October and, some months later, the initiation of the Reagan administration's covert funding of the war in Nicaragua that would be revealed during the Iran-Contra scandal. The same president who here touts "Bolívar's ideals of Pan Americanism, based on independence, solidarity, sovereignty, as well as the right of all nations to live in peace" was at that very moment engaging through the CIA in a military resistance against a sovereign government in Nicaragua and, less directly, in funding government-sponsored death squads in El Salvador. In its ebullient invocation of the 1826 Congress of Panama, the proclamation embeds more distant historical ironies as well. In fact, no US representative attended that historic conference, the first international congress held in the American hemisphere. And if it had been up to Bolívar himself, the US government would never even have been invited to send its emissaries.²

The purpose of the Congress of Panama was to form a hemispheric political coalition foresworn to defend its member states against imperial threat from Europe, particularly Spain, and to liberate the remaining Spanish American colonial territories, notably Cuba and Puerto Rico.³ Over the course of ten sessions, the representatives of the Congress produced a written constitution of thirty-two articles, the Treaty of Perpetual Union, League, and Confederation. Article 27 prohibited the slave trade. Representing a large portion of the North and South American continents, running from California to Peru, the Congress marked what many historians have regarded as the first flourishing of a hemispheric consciousness. Today's Organization of American States traces its ancestry to this momentous meeting, citing it as a precedent for modern world organization more generally. The two emissaries assigned to represent the United States at the Congress, however, never reached their intended goal. One fell ill en route and died before his arrival in Panama; the other feared for his health and stayed in the United States until after the conference had adjourned. Though seemingly random, these misfortunes – events tied to seasonal weather and disease – in fact have much to tell us about the way we have long organized our dominant narratives of US literary history: as part of a discrete national story rather than an international anthology of conversing and competing contributions. As I relate them here, however, the three decades of literary production that followed the 1826 Congress of Panama are inextricable from the US failure to attend it – and from the larger cultural crisis that this failure both embodied in the moment and inaugurated for years to come.

The years leading up to the Congress of Panama witnessed the emergence of the first internationally recognized authors from the United States as well as an initial burgeoning of hemispheric thought within the national imagination. As Washington Irving, William Cullen Bryant, and James Fenimore Cooper gained acceptance at home and abroad as the first widely respected national writers, a generation of US intellectuals simultaneously began to identify the revolutionary history of the United States with the histories of the Latin American states that had recently gained or were still fighting for their independence from Spain. In the political realm, such hemispheric consciousness registered itself most famously in the Monroe Doctrine, first formulated in 1823. Despite its overriding unilateral character, the Monroe Doctrine marked the earliest development of a US foreign policy within a hemispheric framework, one that specifically claimed to defend the sovereignty of the new and imminent Latin American republics from European imperial threat. Our contemporary understanding of this

doctrine, of course, is inseparable from the ways in which US administrations have invoked it in outlining Latin American policy to suit national economic ends. In its original incarnation, however, the Monroe Doctrine represented a vast departure from a foreign policy that had previously been defined by its isolationism. So radical was the paradigm shift it marked that some Latin American historians have even suggested (though probably inaccurately) that one of the principal influences upon James Monroe and John Quincy Adams in drafting the doctrine was in fact a Colombian envoy, Manuel Torres, who visited Washington during the early 1820s on a mission to advise the two US statesmen on the benefits of a hemispheric, inter-American cooperative system.⁴

It would be all too easy to take this period's hemispheric rhetoric of cooperation and commonality at face value, though in fact the enthusiasm for inter-American revolutionary solidarity ostensibly embodied in the Monroe Doctrine emerged in large part from US interests in the opening of Latin American markets. It is precisely this disjunction between the hard-nosed economic policy engineered by the nation's political class and the hemispheric idealism registered in the US public sphere that makes this brief period such an intriguing context for the rise of the first internationally recognized writers. In 1823 the editor of the prestigious *North American Review*, Jared Sparks, wrote to the US State Department requesting information about the newly formed Latin American governments and the status of the other colonies' ongoing revolutions for independence from Spain. "Dare you enter that labyrinth of history?" responded an official from the State Department. "I confess to you, I would not undertake to get and give a distinct view of events in South America, since 1805 . . . It must be a task of Hercules."⁵ Sparks, however, was undeterred, and published a wide-ranging selection of articles on Latin America and the Caribbean during the 1820s, including reviews of recent travel books about Colombia and the "progress of South America in the career of revolution, independence, and liberty"; articles on the history of colonial Spanish Florida and Mexico; essays covering Alexander von Humboldt's writings about Latin America, US Minister to Mexico Joel R. Poinsett's *Notes on Mexico*, and the Ecuadorian writer Vicente Rocafuerte's *Ensayo político*, published in New York; a highly positive review of an 1816 autobiography by the Haitian writer and political strategist Baron Vastey, who had served under Toussaint Louverture during the Haitian Revolution; and an article on a volume of *New Spanish Grammar, Adapted to Every Class of Learners* by Mariano Cubí y Soler, in which Sparks noted that "[n]ext to our own language, the Spanish will be likely at a future day to become the most important in this country . . . a desirable,

if not essential acquisition to our men of business, as well as to scholars and politicians.”⁶ In July of 1824 Sparks announced to the readership that future issues of the *North American Review* would be devoted to giving “as full and minute a view of the revolutionary history of South America, as the nature of our work will admit” – “a subject . . . much less understood in this country than its merits deserve, or than our interests as a nation would seem to require.”⁷ Praising the spread of liberty in South America for its ostensible reenactment of the struggle for political independence in colonial North America, Sparks detailed the arrival of the first printing press in Chile, which he attributed to three US travelers who had allegedly carried the machine to that country directly from New York in 1811, so that they might sell it to the “Patriots.”⁸

But if Sparks’s editorial touts the *North American Review*’s “high praise and confidence” in South American independence, bespeaking a widespread spirit of inter-American alliance, it also contains the seeds of a cultural anxiety that already attended precisely such hemispheric thinking: as Sparks put it in the same article, “our neighbors may become our rivals.”⁹ The same issue contains a review of Lydia Maria Child’s 1824 novel *Hobomok* that praises the author’s “considerable talent” while noting “a very considerable objection to the catastrophe of this story,” which centers on an interracial marriage between white and Indian characters – “a train of events not only unnatural but revolting, we conceive, to every feeling of delicacy in man or woman.”¹⁰ The inter-American sensibility that Sparks was attempting to foster could not coexist for long beside the Anglo-Saxonist obsessions that would soon determine much of the US public sphere’s relation to the wider hemisphere. As the future senator and Secretary of State Edward Everett had already scoffed during 1821, also writing for the *North American Review*, “That Buenos Ayres and Mexico are part of our continent may suggest fine themes for general declamation and poetry is true,” but in the political realm, he warned, “We can have no well-founded sympathy with [Latin Americans] . . . a corrupt and mixed race of various shades and sorts of men.” Asserting “the well-known degeneracy of the superior race in such a mixture of blood,” Everett charted the typology and nomenclature for various kinds of racial *mestizaje* in Latin America.¹¹ Less than a decade later, Everett’s older brother, the writer and diplomat Alexander Hill Everett, would begin a long correspondence with the influential Cuban intellectual Domingo del Monte, who sent him information about literature and racial politics in Cuba that the elder Everett would publish under his own name in the blatantly imperialist *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*.

By the mid-1820s, a mere three years after the promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine, the cultural ideal of hemispheric affiliation seemed on the verge of extinction. When President John Quincy Adams, a gradual convert from isolationist to hemispheric foreign policy, entreated Congress to send diplomatic representatives to Bolívar's 1826 Congress of Panama, his partisan opponents invoked the rhetoric of racial contagion, complaining that he had caught "Spanish American fever" from his chief advisor, the ardent pan-Americanist Henry Clay.¹² The debates on this proposed "Panama Mission" – which fill three volumes of the Congressional Record by themselves – make clear the extent to which racial politics and the issue of slavery played into its ultimate failure. Staunchly opposing Adams's proposal to send representatives to the Congress, Senator Robert Y. Hayne of South Carolina warned that the newly independent Latin American republics "have proclaimed the principles of 'liberty and equality' and have marched to victory under the banner of 'universal emancipation.'" "You find men of color at the head of their armies, in their Legislative Halls, and in their Executive Departments," Hayne warned on the floor of the Senate. A significant part of the political anxiety surrounding the imminent Congress arose from its avowed interest in the liberation of Cuba and Puerto Rico from Spain, which even Clay vehemently opposed, because it would mean the immediate abolition of slavery in a key region of the triangular trade sustaining the US economy – a region that had already seen the demise of Haiti as the most lucrative slaveholding colony in the hemisphere.

The free status of Haiti constituted yet another controversy surrounding the upcoming Congress and its agenda. Haiti's embodiment of the perceived threat of slave insurrection overlay a deeper and less tangible problem for US proponents of the peculiar institution: the very fact of Haitian independence suggested that contemporary racial ideologies would inevitably be understood and addressed in international rather than purely domestic contexts. In opposing US participation in the Congress, Hayne warned against "touch[ing] the question of the independence of Hayti" with what he called the "Revolutionary Governments" in the Americas – "whose own history affords an example scarcely less fatal to our repose." "They are looking to Hayti, even now, with feelings of the strongest confraternity," intoned Hayne, "and show, by the very documents before us, that they acknowledge her to be independent."¹³

Hayne was in fact mistaken on this last pronouncement, for no American government granted diplomatic acknowledgment of Haiti until much later in the century. His rhetoric nevertheless reveals much about Haiti's

powerful place within an inter-American dialogue on slavery and race. And such a hemispheric conversation, from the senator's point of view, held the potential for dangerous cross-cultural threats to what he called "our dearest interests . . . our rights in that species of property" known as slaves. For Hayne, even to consider the issue of slavery within such a context was to render permeable (or to admit the permeability of) the borders of the United States as well as the racial categories upon which its national identity depended. Like a number of other senators, Hayne insisted that the subject of "Hayti" – and the topics of abolition and racial equality that the Haitian republic then represented to the rest of the world – should not be addressed within any international context, and in particular within any inter-American frame: "There is not a nation on the globe with whom I would consult on that subject, and, least of all, the new Republics." Issues of race and slavery, Hayne emphasized repeatedly, "must be considered and treated entirely as a DOMESTIC QUESTION."¹⁴

In the face of such opposition, the congressional debates over the Panama Mission lasted for nearly five months, holding up Adams's appointed US representatives for so long that they faced a dangerous season for travel when they were finally approved to attend the conference. That one died en route of fever and the other was too afraid of disease to leave in time for the meeting can thus be attributed in part to those senators and congressmen who objected to the international American model of affiliation and negotiation the conference represented. In this sense, the failure of US representatives to attend the Congress in Panama marked the *de facto* ascendance of a predominantly national frame of cultural analysis over an inter-American one.

It is surely no coincidence that the triumph of "domestic" over hemispheric thought converged with a cultural moment that also witnessed the beginnings of literary nationalism: the first period in which US writers came to be understood as national figures, with the potential to win recognition not only at home but abroad, and thus to secure the place of the country's literature in a Western agonism formerly limited to more venerable traditions. But if Europe represented the obvious point of reference for measuring the new development of a national literature, the demise within the United States of a potential *inter-American* system of political relations – one that might account for and mediate the state-sanctioned interactions of coherent and discrete national entities – soon gave way to a kind of *transamerican* literary imaginary within the US public sphere. Fraught with the cultural anxieties and desires that attested to a larger crisis of national identity, this imaginary was from the beginning riddled with

the contradictions and rhetorical impasses attending a nation whose geographic borders were expanding even as its imagined racial borders were narrowing and calcifying. The writers emerging from this cultural milieu sought alternately to solidify and to signify across the unstable boundaries of nation and race within a New World arena characterized precisely by its transnationality: by the overlap and simultaneity of different national claims upon territories as well as upon literary texts and traditions.

The complexities of literary transamericanism are nowhere more clearly exemplified than in the 1826 historical novel *Jicoténcal*, written in Spanish, authored (possibly) by a Cuban exile, published in Philadelphia, and focused on the Conquest of Mexico.¹⁵ Appearing in the same year as the Congress of Panama, *Jicoténcal* stages the paradoxes of transamericanism on two levels: as a primary order of transnational contradiction between colonial settlement and indigenous sovereignty, and as a secondary order of ambiguous racial identities, literary crossings, and individual itinerancies between the Caribbean, Mexico, and the United States. In the years that followed the novel's publication and the failure of Adams's Panama Mission, nineteenth-century US writers registered in numerous ways the various transamerican historical narratives and literary inheritances that could never be contained within Senator Haynes's proposed "Domestic Question": from stories of revolution in Saint-Domingue to tales about mysterious emigrants from the francophone West Indies; from poetic speculations about the annexation of Mexican territory to essayistic visions of an anglophone literary purity defined by its own manifest destiny; from specters of slave revolt in Cuban-set fictions to overt narrative aspirations for that "finest and most fertile" of the West Indian islands and the slave-trading port of Matanzas.

By 1856, the year that saw the official formation of the antislavery Republican party, a literal crisis of transnationalism waited around the corner, less than a decade away: the secession that made two nations, Union and Confederate, exist simultaneously within one. The North-South divide remains firmly entrenched as the organizing principle of nationalist literary histories, but the confederacy in fact often imagined itself quite beyond the territorial borders of the nation: in relation to and as the potential seat of a Greater South, a slaveholding empire that might encompass Cuba, the Caribbean, the southern hemisphere in its entirety. Seen in this light, the Civil War becomes not the inevitable fulcrum of the national literary and historical trajectory, but one in a long series of transamerican crises in the national definition of the United States. After the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo renamed over a third of Mexico as US territory,

and after the filibuster William Walker attempted in 1856 to colonize first Mexico and then Nicaragua with the US government's sympathies behind him, the Continental Treaty signed in Chile that same year by representatives of three Latin American nations would now identify the United States as the primary threat to the wider Americas. The European imperial powers opposed by the Congress of Panama had been displaced by an enemy from within: as the Haitian poet Pierre Faubert put it, also in 1856, this northern "Republic, supported upon slavery,/dreams, greedy, of your flowered fields!"

In the thirty years separating the Congress of Panama from the Continental Treaty signed in Chile lie the seeds of a largely untold story about a period that was crucially formative of the literatures of the United States. The story survives in more than one language and in more than one collective memory. It can be recovered only through a lens comprised of more than one national or regional literary tradition. The following chapters tell only part of this story – a selective part, inevitably: the hemispheric genealogies I attempt to uncover here are determined by the particular authors, archives, and languages it references, and even more by its deliberately limited geographic scope, which encompasses Mexico and the Caribbean (to the exclusion, for example, of South America and Canada) as the main focal points in a history of emerging US imperialism. Yet the writers inhabiting this era of cross-cultural affiliation and competition offer us a starting point for telling other parts of the story. Even as new modes of nationalism swept across the Americas, these writers traced within their works the twisted routes of travel and exile, of slave trade and slave revolt, of literary transmission and diplomatic exchange, and in the process revealed the transamerican contingencies and contradictions shaping the uncertain contours of their different historical moments.

This book argues that transamerican literary relations throughout the nineteenth century, and particularly so during the thirty-year span covered in the following chapters, came to assume a central role in reshaping the public spheres of cultural production and political commentary in the United States and other parts of the American hemisphere. As I hope to show, the formation of the American Renaissance that continues to organize so many literary-historiographical narratives of the nineteenth-century United States, whether through reinscription or multiculturalist revision, might more accurately be reconfigured as a *transamerican* renaissance, a period of literary border crossing, intercontinental exchange, and complex political implications whose unfamiliar genealogies we are just beginning to

discern. The history of US literary culture and its hemispheric genealogies that I attempt to document here brings the work of mainstream writers and intellectuals, from William Cullen Bryant to Frederick Douglass, into dialogue with a range of other American texts, from recently “recovered” US hispanophone writings to the little-studied francophone strands of African American literary history to works written and published outside the United States itself. Drawing on a range of genres from Cuba, Mexico, and the francophone Caribbean, the book traces the genealogical narratives embedded within literary traditions that share a legacy of colonialism, slavery, and indigenous “removals.” In their relations to a number of geographical sites and literary works across national and linguistic boundaries, the clusters of writings treated here point to a culturally and historically broader conception of the term “America” than the nationalistic and anglophone sense prevailing in all but the most recent studies of the period. Viewed from such an angle, the writers addressed in this study begin to appear as important players in a period of hemispheric literary transmission that included extended cultural dialogue between the United States and other American sites, from Mexico City to Havana to Port-au-Prince. Attempting to recover and account for the international and hemispherically American dimensions of the so-called American Renaissance, this book resituates some of the defining decades of US literary history within a cross-cultural and multilingual conversation about race and colonialism, slavery and rebellion, imperial desire and anxiety, the nature of historical narrative, and the power of literary revisionism as a hemispheric practice of affiliation and contestation.

With occasional forays into preceding or succeeding decades, the five main chapters trace a roughly chronological history of literary production within a number of competing American public spheres of the nineteenth century. This history’s locatedness within a particular geopolitical arena – circumscribed by the United States, the Caribbean, and coastal and metropolitan Mexico – allows individual chapters to focus on key sites of response to an emergent US imperialism while affording a certain degree of precision regarding the changing nationalist obsessions with the foreign characterizing the three decades under consideration, from the hispanophilia of the 1820s to the prolific and confused discourse on Haiti in the 1850s. The introduction begins with the transamerican imaginings of two figures who in their own ways centrally shaped the national literary self-consciousness of the nineteenth century. Walter Channing, influential man of letters and frequent contributor to the *North American Review*, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, a close friend and cohort of Channing’s son, the

renowned abolitionist William Ellery Channing, both promoted a kind of racial and linguistic purity in the national literature while remaining steadfastly blind to the hemispheric anxieties that were already proving instrumental in their own visions of this literature's emergence. Yet as I go on to suggest, even some of the most centrally influential writers in this period – Cooper, Hawthorne, Bryant, Douglass, Melville, Stowe, and numerous others – were not simply thematically influenced by emergent hemispheric sensibilities, but also embedded within an international network of literary cultures and lines of influence that provide crucial ways of understanding and delineating their character as national writers. The chapter thus offers a preliminary overview of a number of familiar US writers in relation to an array of contemporaneous authors – most of them writing in Spanish and French, and many of them living and writing in Cuba, Mexico, and the francophone Caribbean, as well as in exile communities in Paris and the United States – who defined a particular transnational literary arena (one of many, it goes without saying) within which the cultural work of the American Renaissance might productively be understood. The diachronic, genealogical relations I propose among texts from widely divergent national and linguistic traditions illuminate just a few of the many strands of transamerican and transatlantic exchange shaping this formative period of US literary history.

Chapter Two explores the murky origins and later nationalist appropriations of what some scholars have classified as the first hispanophone historical novel of the American hemisphere, *Jicoténcal*, published anonymously in the northeastern United States in 1826. Reading *Jicoténcal* against and through its anglophone contemporary, *The Last of the Mohicans*, I examine the novels' very different relationships to the early historiography of the Americas, attending to what this contrast suggests about their opposing views of inter-American relations in the 1820s. After a speculative excursus on the possibly collaborative authorship of *Jicoténcal*, I turn to a lineal descendant of both novels, William Hickling Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico* (1843), to explore its place within a profound shift in hemispheric rhetorics that occurred between the 1820s and 1840s. This shift is registered in the arguments about the nature of national and historical understanding informing the literary-historical and fictional representations of the Mexican Conquest explored throughout the chapter. The chapter as a whole proposes the controversial national status of *Jicoténcal* as a point of departure for imagining the hemispheric genealogies of nineteenth-century US literature explored in subsequent chapters of the book.

If the second chapter engages literary transamericanism through a juxtaposition of works published within US borders, Chapter Three moves transatlantically to consider the little-known nineteenth-century periodical *Revue des Colonies* for its fascinating understanding of the place of early US literary production within an anticolonial and abolitionist genealogy of authorship. In doing so, the chapter thus also turns from the contradictory logic of hemispheric solidarity that characterized the northeastern US literary culture of the 1820s to the next decade's consolidation of a largely southern, proslavery nativism directed specifically at the francophone West Indies. It was partially in response to this context that the *Revue* was published from Paris during the 1830s and early 1840s, the same years that saw the rise in prominence and influence of US periodicals such as the *North American Review* and the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*. Sponsored by a small group of Caribbean intellectuals calling themselves the Société des Hommes de Couleur (Society of [free] Men of Color), the *Revue* brought together a mixture of writings recording and analyzing journalism, travel narratives, legal history, economic production, and intellectual debates, through which it constructed a self-consciously transnational critical framework for its central focus upon the continuing slave trade. In this respect, the *Revue's* wide selection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fiction, poetry, and literary criticism offers a sweeping perspective upon what today might be called an early comparative American literature. Exploring the *Revue's* presentations of literature by writers including Phillis Wheatley and Victor Séjour, the chapter concludes by considering how we might continue to situate the transnational and multilingual genealogies of early African American literary culture more generally, from Douglass and Harriet Jacobs to the West Indian authors Mary Prince and Mary Seacole to the Cuban writers Plácido and Juan Francisco Manzano.

Chapter Four is loosely situated within the decade of the 1840s, which marked an apogee of US intellectual interest in Cuban literary culture undergirded by increasing political interest in the fate of the island-colony. Addressing a cluster of related examples of Cuban-US literary exchange and transmission, the chapter begins with the diverse literary crossings that shaped the career of William Cullen Bryant, once the most renowned US poet of the nineteenth century, later doomed to near obscurity for what Matthiessen deemed his "fatal imitation of Europe." Searching beneath Bryant's formal poetic orientation toward Europe for the transamerican genealogies that underlie his larger career as a translator and travel writer, I examine the cultural agenda propounded by his intellectual coterie as a kind of literary manifest destiny. Cirilo Villaverde's *Cecilia Valdés*, completed and

published in New York, provides a rich counterpoint to Bryant's Cuban imaginary, documenting the struggle among Cuban writers working both on the island and in exile in the United States to foster a spirit of Cuban literary independence against the constraints of colonial censorship and US economic and cultural imperialism. The chapter goes on to explore a more direct exemplification of this transamerican literary and cultural exchange by turning to a remarkable (though virtually unstudied) series of letters between Domingo del Monte, prominent Cuban intellectual and founder of the influential *tertulia* that catalyzed what some have defined as the golden age of nineteenth-century Cuban literary history; and the US writer Alexander Hill Everett, a poet, critic, and prominent editor for the *North American Review*. As I argue, the letters point to the intriguingly consistent circulation of Cuban writings among the US literary elite while suggesting some of the fraught ideological consequences such an exchange could produce. These consequences are addressed in compelling terms in Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda's reformist novel *Sab*, the chapter's fourth and final example, which explores through its eponymous hero an alternative Cuban tradition opposed to the crudely commercial literary manifest destiny embodied in the novel's Anglo-American antagonist.

Chapter Five recontextualizes Nathaniel Hawthorne's short fiction within a sphere of transamerican cultural and literary exchange emerging out of relations between the United States and Mexico in the years surrounding the US-Mexican War. This sphere of transmission included the writings of both the celebrated travel author John L. Stephens, whose particular genealogical obsession with Indian origins throughout the American hemisphere finds symbolic expression in the ubiquitous figure of the "mano colorada" (red hand) marking the Yucatán ruins, and the Mexican translator of Stephens's work, Justo Sierra O'Reilly, the contemporaneous novelist and politician known as the father of peninsular (or Yucateco) Mexican literary history. Sierra was also the author of a travel work, *Diario de nuestro viaje a los Estados Unidos* (1847–8), documenting his meetings with US figures ranging from Prescott to President Polk, and exemplifying his concerns about the preservation of racial whiteness in the Yucatán and the political status of this territory vis-à-vis Mexico, Texas, and the United States – concerns that he had approached from an entirely different perspective in his earlier novella *El filibustero*, published one year before Hawthorne's canonical story "Rappaccini's Daughter." As I read them here, these texts collectively illuminate Hawthorne's hidden literary borrowings from Frances Calderón de la Barca's *Life in Mexico*, a work mired in hemispheric controversies over colonialism, race, slavery, and US imperial

designs on Mexico. The chapter seeks ultimately to recover what I call the Mexican genealogy of Hawthorne's story: both its immediate nineteenth-century predecessor in *Life in Mexico* and its afterlife in Octavio Paz's 1956 drama *La hija de Rappaccini*, which provides a concluding perspective upon the wider political implications of Hawthorne's appropriation of Calderón's writing for a tale that so manifestly eschews the transamerican scenes inspiring it.

The final chapter explores the obsession with Haiti in the US public sphere of the 1850s, and how this obsession helped to shape the transamerican genealogy of a historical play by the Haitian dramatist, poet, and intellectual Pierre Faubert (1806–68). Published in 1856 and never translated into English, *Ogé, ou, Le préjugé de couleur* (*Ogé, or, Color Prejudice*) documented the 1790 outbreak of a revolt of free men of color in colonial Saint-Domingue and sought thereby to contribute a dramatic voice to the transamerican discourse on the history of independent Haiti. Responding to two works published in the United States that take up the issue of Haitian independence, Faubert explores the United States as a New World arena of *métissage* while positioning his play within a hemispheric genealogy both thematically and intertextually. Most notably, his play recasts the domestic racial romance of Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in a dramatic text that constitutes what I suggest is one of the very earliest literary responses to Stowe's novel in the francophone Americas. The play's revisionist positioning of itself within a transamerican framework provides a powerful lens through which to reconsider *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, along with a number of other nineteenth- and early twentieth-century works, in their occluded francophone-Caribbean contexts.

The epilogue takes up in a sense from where Chapter Six concludes, the year of *Ogé's* publication. In 1856 the future national poet of the Dominican Republic, Salomé Ureña, was only six years old. As the contemporary novelist Julia Alvarez resurrects her, however, Ureña begins the narration of her early life in that most significant year. Alvarez's metafictional novel about the nineteenth-century poet and her larger family of writers, professors, journalists, and politicians, *In the Name of Salomé* (2000), offers a critical meditation upon a number of the nineteenth-century transamerican literary scenes and public spheres treated in this book, producing a historical and archival knowledge that is also a present-day politics of pedagogy. Through the figure of Ureña's daughter, a literature professor working at a northeastern US university, Alvarez not only proposes a balance of aesthetic value between the national Dominican poet of the nineteenth century and the writing produced during the American Renaissance, but also insists

upon the dialectical and constitutive tension between the histories of the United States and the wider Americas. This same tension subtends the various narratives of literary history that comprise the subject of this book, which turns to Alvarez's novel in conclusion for its vision of nineteenth-century transamerican literary relations as an enduring archive linking past and present across the hemisphere.

Introduction: transamerican renaissance

So multiplied are the connexions existing between nation and nation in modern times, that intellectual originality may justly be regarded as one of the greatest phenomena in nature.

Walter Channing, "Essay on American Language and Literature" (1815)

BLINDNESS AND BINOCULARITY

In the September 1815 issue of the *North American Review*, Walter Channing described in searing terms the "melancholy record" of literary production in the United States in an essay that would set the tone for discussions of the national literature for decades to come. Responding to his "transatlantick brethren" in England, Channing took from the pages of the *London Quarterly Review* a pronouncement upon nineteenth-century modernity that served as an epigraph to his essay (and serves this chapter in the same capacity). Channing's essay promotes his own "unqualified belief" in the British-authored thesis in order to justify what he perceives as "the barrenness of American Literature" – and, in an ironic reversal seemingly lost on Channing himself, to call for a revolution of literary and intellectual independence from Europe. Partially disabling to this revolution, as Channing sees it, has been the ascendancy of a transnational arena of cultural exchange – a fraught matrix of linguistic as well as human crossings, of "multiplied . . . connexions existing between nation and nation" – that his argument both appropriates and curiously elides.¹

As the essay proceeds, its text registers not so much the "barrenness" of the national literature as its reproductive potential for unsanctioned offspring, an illicit literary descent that embodies Channing's larger vision of an "American Literature." "National literature," he argues, "seems to be the product, the legitimate product, of a national language." Yet the legitimacy of literary production has been hindered by the new nation's inheritance

from its "mother country," a legacy figured tellingly here as "a slavery to a common tongue." Equally threatening to the national literature is its "delight . . . in the acquisition of foreign literature," an "enslaving" attraction to foreign tongues and traveling texts that has forestalled all attempts to initiate a properly "American" tradition. As Channing insists, "[t]here is something peculiarly opposed to literary originality, in the colonial existence which was unfortunately so long the condition of America":

All that can be expected from such a colony, made up of all sorts of materials, speaking not only the dialects of the original language, but the different languages of the three different nations from which it sprung, is to preserve a purity in one of them. It must first choose one, then guard it from even the least corruption to which it would be remarkably liable. It must be forever jealous to prevent and put down that adaptation of new terms for new objects, and especially for new ideas, that different scenes and new relations might give rise to.²

Among the "three different nations," the attempted preservation of the English language over and against the languages of imperial France and Spain is ostensibly undesirable in Channing's argument; in fact, "it is for our literature most heartily to be lamented that we had not found a confusion of tongues" in the "Babel of the Revolution." The essay nevertheless proposes an irrevocable choice and a series of refusals as the very root of the national literary tradition: the selection of one language over others demands the concordant refusal of a multilingual literary milieu that for Channing can lead only to "corruption" of the chosen tongue. Refused as well are the potential literary contributions of the "dialects of the original language," which Channing collectively designates near the end of the essay as "the oral literature of [the] aborigines." "This country has a literature" after all, Channing asserts, that of "the Indian," "[r]ich as the soil on which he was nurtured." While "not the least indebted . . . to the labor of the colonies," however (and not, like English, "enfeebled by excess cultivation"), the Indian's tongue has grown "precipitous and hoarse as the cataract among whose mists he is descanting" as it nears extinction. Nor will the colonies of the Caribbean be much help in furnishing the culturally "enslav[ed]" young nation with a literary language of its own: as Channing puts it in a revealing dismissal of the significance of colonial writings, "When did England look to the West Indies for anything but its sugars?"³

Published in the first volume of the *North American Review*, Channing's "Essay on American Language and Literature" epitomizes the cultural sensibility that will define the many paradoxes of US literary nationalism over

the next century: urbane authors and editors fluent in numerous languages publish in only one; indigenous traditions lovingly admired for their “rich” originality furnish no more than occasions for nostalgia; and the slaveholding economies that undergird the public sphere of cultural production are reduced to the level of metaphor. In this respect, Channing’s essay provides an early and highly representative example of the journal’s larger concern with the emergence of a national intellectual culture. Founded in 1815 by William Tudor, with Channing’s brother Edward Tyrell Channing and Richard Henry Dana, Jr., the *North American Review* was the first US literary journal to print entirely original content, quickly becoming one of the most prestigious of nineteenth-century periodicals. Self-consciously elite, the *Review* addressed itself to an exclusive class of intelligentsia dominating the northeastern seat of US literary capital, a small but powerful group of readers and writers among whom circulated, as one early contributor put it, “the best that has been said and thought.” Despite its limited audience, however, the journal continued to flourish in the 1830s, the years of Andrew Jackson’s presidency and the onset of the “golden age” of magazines, when social upheaval and rising literacy rates demanded a more democratic appeal in most successful periodicals. Retaining its distinguished reputation into the twentieth century, the *Review* published the work of almost every major US writer, from the early poetry and essays of William Cullen Bryant through the late-century contributions of Henry James and William Dean Howells. The journal and its contributors envisioned their mission as nothing less than the shaping of a national tradition in literature, a collective intellectual endeavor of patriotic proportions through which a group of prominent nineteenth-century writers would make up for the alleged shortcomings of those who had preceded them, bringing to a glorious end what Channing himself led the way in condemning as “the literary delinquency of America.”

One such contributor was Ralph Waldo Emerson, who published essays, poems, and reviews in the journal for over half a century, and who famously followed Channing in calling for a national literature independent of Europe. By mid-century, some decades after the publication of Channing’s foundational essay, Emerson was proclaiming the urgency of emancipation in both national and hemispheric arenas. In the national context, Emerson’s focus on emancipation was initially metaphorical. Poetical rather than political, the forms of liberation he envisioned for the United States gave shape to his own reputation as the leading free thinker of his times, the ostensible patriarch of what many have since called a “truly American” tradition in letters. Yet the spirit of unfettered literary nationalism that

Emerson sought to elicit in his readers and audiences proved to be underpinned by far more literal questions of emancipation, and by inescapably transamerican projections and tensions. Unlike many of the writers examined in this study, Emerson rarely explored the literary possibilities afforded by inter-American political relations and cultural crossings; nor was he, as were other writers covered in this book, a great reader of Caribbean or Latin American literature, a translator of hispanophone or francophone American writings, or even a traveler to American sites outside the United States. Nevertheless, the hemispheric logic permeating his writings alternatively consolidates and distorts the narrative of literary origins and national identity that he was in the process of defining.

In 1844 Emerson's canonical essay "The Poet" called for an emergence of national bards to effect an "emancipation . . . dear to all men" – for "poets are thus liberating gods" – through which the "ample geography" of the nation might be sung. For all its ebullience, though, the essay fails to resolve the contradictions embedded in its own geographical catalogue of the country: "Our logrolling, our stumps and their politics, our fisheries, our Negroes, and Indians, our boasts, and our repudiations, the wrath of rogues, and the pusillanimity of honest men, the northern trade, the southern planting, the western clearing, Oregon, and Texas . . ." ⁴ If this memorable list objectifies "Negroes" and "Indians" as material commodities alongside the nation's fisheries and other natural resources, it also admits the "repudiations" and moral "pusillanimity" of purportedly "honest men," among whom the distinctly nonmetaphorical institution of slavery and the indigenous removals of "western clearing" have sundered a revolutionary legacy of political freedom. At the same time, the territorial aspirations of this catalogue lend support to the nation's expansionist vision of itself, from the hotly disputed Oregon Territory to the Republic of Texas, whose imminent annexation to the United States would constitute an advance against sovereign Mexico and catalyze the US-Mexican War. The literary nationalism that Emerson's essay nervously celebrates, in other words, fails to obscure the hemispheric contingencies from which it emerges – a failure highlighted by his delivery, in the same year he published "The Poet," of his famous address on "Emancipation in the British West Indies."

Presented at the courthouse in Concord on August 1, the speech laid the groundwork for Emerson's future antislavery writings by obliquely approaching the "peculiar institution" of the United States from the vantage point of Caribbean slavery, documenting the ten-year history of abolition on the British islands as well as the forty-year independence of Haiti. Emerson's address defines the British abolition as a "moral revolution," and

advises in no uncertain terms that US citizens “in their primary capacity take up [the] cause” against slavery on behalf of those who have “no valuable business to throw into any man’s hands; no strong vote to cast at the elections.”⁵ As his contemporaneous journals and letters reveal, Emerson was forced to forestall the completion of his second volume of essays, which included “The Poet” – a text over which he had been fretting, unable to “arrive at [or] tend to any conclusion” – in order to write “Emancipation.” Emerging amid fierce regional debates over the potential extension of slavery into new territories, the address was considered by some to be too controversial for a public reading even before Emerson delivered it at the Concord courthouse. The text of the speech was nevertheless published one month later, on September 9. In one of the many odd coincidences that pervade a period of transamerican political and literary tensions, a fire broke out on the same day in Benjamin Bradley’s bookbindery in Boston, where the prepared manuscript of Emerson’s *Essays: Second Series* awaited its final printing. The fire caused enough damage that the publication of the volume, which included “The Poet,” was delayed by several months.⁶ Thus, while the manifesto of literary nationalism that Emerson had worked on for so long could not yet reach the reading public, his hemispheric consideration of slavery in “Emancipation in the British West Indies” arrived safely in its published form.

Like “The Poet,” this essay casts intellectuality and creativity as the primary factors in the author’s consideration of emancipation. “When at last in a race a new principle appears, an idea – *that* conserves it; ideas only save races,” Emerson insists here. “If the black man is feeble and . . . not on a parity with the best race, the black man must serve and be exterminated. But if the black man carries in his bosom an indispensable element for a new and coming civilization, no wrong nor strength nor circumstance can hurt him: he will survive and play his part.”⁷ Reiterating the rhetoric of biological determinism that led him in his private writings of the same period to predict that “so inferior a race must perish shortly,” Emerson in this essay turns instead to the history of Caribbean slave revolutions and “the arrival in the world of such men as Toussaint, and the Haytian heroes, or of the leaders of their race in Barbadoes and Jamaica” as a “good omen” that “outweighs . . . all the English and American humanity.”⁸

In a certain sense, then, a turn toward the wider Americas seems to provide Emerson with a safely removed site for developing a public politics, a transnational geography of abstract but passionate egalitarianism. At the same time, the hemispheric logic evident in such writings offered a series of fleeting alternatives to both his ubiquitous obsession with what he

called “the genius of the Saxon race” and to the related narrative of national identity he was so instrumental in developing.⁹ In “Character,” also completed in 1844, Emerson proposed hypothetically that “a slaver on the coast of Guinea should take on board a gang of Negroes which should contain persons of the stamp of Toussaint L’Ouverture: or, let us fancy, under these swarthy masks he has a gang of Washingtons in chains.” Substituting an Anglo-Saxon US historical figure for the famous black Haitian revolutionary, Emerson wonders, “When they arrive at Cuba, will the relative order of the ship’s company be the same?”¹⁰ That he clearly believes not – privileging individual character over either power structure or political policy – is less striking than his implicit triangulation of the former Saint-Domingue, the United States, and finally Cuba through their shared histories of Atlantic trade in African slaves. The essay points to the mutually defining nature of individual and national character as a means of theorizing a transamerican political genealogy: Emerson figures Washington alongside Toussaint Louverture as the twinned representative figures of New World revolutionary beginnings, embodying no less than the historical origins of the first two independent republics of the American hemisphere.

Yet the wider Americas also mark in Emerson’s writings a site of troubling incoherence. His 1842 essay on “Fate” celebrates the “imperial Saxon race” that “shall conquer . . . a hundred Mexicos” and approvingly notes “all the bloods it shall absorb and domineer,” despite his simultaneous assertion that “Nature detests hybrids.”¹¹ Later essays, however, scorn as cynical those politicians who supported the Fugitive Slave Law purely because they embraced what Emerson deplored as the national fate: that “Cuba would be had and Mexico would be had,” that “slavery got Texas and now will have Cuba.”¹² And while “Emancipation” documents Emerson’s apparent abhorrence of the widespread US consumption of products that he saw as tainted by the West Indian slave trade, that most canonical of essays, “Self-Reliance,” rebukes the “angry bigot [who] assumes this bountiful cause of Abolition, and comes to me with his latest news from Barbadoes . . . varnish[ing his] hard, uncharitable ambition with this incredible tenderness for black folk a thousand miles off.”¹³ In “The American Scholar” Emerson calls for an active and creative reading practice that he neatly sums up in a transparently imperialist proverb: “He that would bring home the wealth of the Indies must carry out the wealth of the Indies.”¹⁴ Literature itself, as Emerson’s 1843 review of Thomas Carlyle’s *Past and Present* figures it, might engage in colonial conquest, taking not only “London and Europe,” with its “East and West Indies for dependencies,” but also

“America, with the Rocky Hills in the horizons”: “[They] have never before been conquered in literature. This is the first invasion and conquest.”¹⁵ As Emerson himself understood, an insidious form of metonymic slippage was common when it came to the problems posed by American borders. “Language has lost its meaning in the universal cant,” complains an 1856 essay on the border wars in Kansas. “The adding of Cuba and central America to the slave marts” is called “enlarging the area of Freedom”: a bitter paradox that registers the inchoate nature of the nation’s long history of hemispheric imperialisms.¹⁶

The contradictions of transamericanism emerge with particular clarity in Emerson’s reactions to the Caribbean peregrinations of his family. His younger brother Edward traveled to St. Croix in 1830 in an effort to improve his health, and by 1831 both Edward and the youngest Emerson brother, Charles, were living and working in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where Edward would settle until his death. Edward learned Spanish well enough in San Juan to write many letters in that language, as did the eldest Emerson brother, William, who worked as a Spanish translator for a New York newspaper.¹⁷ Though Emerson himself never showed particular interest either in the Spanish language or in traveling to any part of the West Indies, he emphatically requested that Edward “make *written minutes* of places & prices & persons & climate that may be of use to any of us hereafter.”¹⁸ Perhaps concerned about Edward’s fragile health as well as his intellectual development, Emerson encouraged him to find academic work as a tutor for the Morell family on a wealthy US plantation in Cuba or, barring that, to come home as soon as possible.¹⁹ Yet while Emerson preached his sermons and contemplated different modes of spirituality at home, Edward instead found a position in Puerto Rico and was, as Charles put it, “turning merchant in earnest – sending hogsheads of sugar – etc –.”²⁰

This choice proved a disappointing one for Emerson, not least because Edward would never again return to his family. Yet one of Emerson’s most fascinating preoccupations with his brothers’ Caribbean stay concerned not their distance from the family but its potential impact upon their ways of seeing. Emerson included the following rumination in a December 1831 letter to them both:

The great misfortune of travelers is that the expectation and the eye gradually form themselves to the new scene. In the West Indies they become West Indians in a few days – so that they cannot if they would tell the New Englander of this moment what he wants to know. You should keep one eye a patriot and the other an emigrant at the same time as the seaman keeps home-time with one watch and apparent with the other.²¹

On one level, of course, the analogy of the seaman's two watches only highlights the spatial and temporal limitations of human vision. The convergence of travelers' expectations and their eyes demonstrates Emerson's apparent understanding of cross-cultural perception as largely determined by preconception. The New Englander perusing his text at home has no direct access to "what he wants to know" because travel writing can never adequately represent to its designated readership the experiences of the foreign seers. Rendering the traveling observers themselves "West Indian in a few days," cross-cultural documentation shapes the seer as much as the seen. Privileging his still New England point of view as the most legitimate, Emerson instructs the traveling Charles and Edward on which of their thoughts to record and when, going so far as to request that they "not show [each other their] communications before they are sent." Casting himself as the omniscient North American viewing the hemisphere through a pure lens, Emerson imagines his own perspective reconciling the cloudy prisms of his brothers' eyes to arrive at a vision unsullied by cross-cultural perception and partiality: "So shall I gather the very truth."²² In other words, while Emerson seems to concede that various factors inevitably mediate his brothers' purportedly Caribbean perspectives and render opaque the travel letters that enable their international transmission, he casts his own powers of perception as ultimately transparent.

Yet for any reader familiar with the famous passage from the 1836 volume *Nature* in which Emerson imagines himself rising above the bare common to become a "transparent eye-ball" – "part or particle of God" and capable of seeing all – this passage is most astonishing in its depiction of a bifurcated pair of eyes in the final sentence.²³ Perhaps the sole image of binocularity in all of Emerson's writings, the description of the "emigrant" eye offset by its "patriot" counterpart, which he proposes that Charles and Edward emulate, constructs acts of hemispheric observation from a "patriot" US perspective as visual and perceptual processes inherently irreconcilable by the traveling observers themselves. In this respect, the passage offers a metaphor for the transamerican impulses and anxieties underlying the national literary renaissance over which Emerson presided. Emerson's nationalist aspirations for the rise of a poet who will become the all-seeing visionary of a particular destiny for "America" – "a poem in our eyes [that] will not wait long for metres" – are devastatingly compromised by the imaginative and actual traversals of national and cultural borders undertaken by his mercantile brothers.²⁴ Indeed, if Emerson's disembodied, universalist, all-seeing "transparent eye-ball" is an enduring image within a dominant nationalist narrative of US literary history, then we might take the strange, doubled

figuration of the “patriot” eye keeping watch over its “emigrant” twin as a symptomatic trope that tells us much about what this dominant history has repressed – and about the insistent pressure of an alternative literary past to which many of Emerson’s contemporaries were contributing.

NATION/TRANSNATION: A THIRTY-YEAR PRÉCIS

Decades before the Civil War and the ontological crisis it presented by dividing one nation into two, Emerson’s contemporaries had struggled to reconcile the formal structures and racial ideologies of literary nationalism with a distinctly transamerican imaginary shaped by cultural fantasies and anxieties about the wider Americas. To put it another way, the era that would largely define the canonical US literary tradition – a tradition we have since come to understand and receive as primarily nationalist, monolingual, and geographically centered in the northeast – rested on a considerable network of transnational literary practices and affiliations that shaped some of this tradition’s central texts as well as the self-understanding of a number of its most influential writers. In the same year that saw the US crisis over the Congress of Panama, James Fenimore Cooper consolidated the “American” identity of his character Duncan Heyward in *The Last of the Mohicans* precisely at the moment when the British soldier becomes conscious of his antipathy for Cora, whose West Indian and racially mixed heritage has permeated the Anglo-American borders of the emerging nation.²⁵ This was also the year that saw the publication in Philadelphia of *Jicoténcal*, an anonymous historical novel written in exile that reconsiders the Spanish conquest of Mexico from an anti-imperialist point of view.²⁶ Cooper himself, foreseeing ever closer relations between the anglophone and hispanophone Americas, argued that Anglo-Americans should put their energies toward learning the Spanish tongue.²⁷ Though certainly motivated by economic and political rather than intercultural interests, Cooper’s contention offers a reminder that the mainstream US literary culture in which he figures prominently coexists alongside and overlaps with a vast hispanophone counterpart represented in literature written by exiles and emigrants from Cuba and other parts of Latin America and the Caribbean as well as in the Mexican cultural production of territories that would be later appropriated by the United States after the US-Mexican War.

The decade of the 1820s also marked the emergence of a coterie of Anglo-American hispanists who took up the looming question of US relations to Mexico and the hispanophone Caribbean in both literary and political arenas.²⁸ Having embarked for Spain in 1826, Washington Irving

perused newly available Spanish documents on Columbus's voyages, wrote a widely influential four-volume history on the subject, and served as a diplomat and advisor on US relations to colonial Cuba and a newly independent Mexico.²⁹ Irving's success influenced later literary hispanists, including William Hickling Prescott, whose bestselling *History of the Conquest of Mexico* appeared in 1843, three years before the US-Mexican War; Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who produced *Evangeline* (1847) during the war and suggestively evoked in his poem what he found most objectionable about his own nation's imperial designs;³⁰ and James Russell Lowell, whose verses in *The Biglow Papers* (1848) openly satirized the war by exposing the corruption underlying US policy.³¹ William Cullen Bryant, during the very years he was composing the verses that would solidify his reputation as an "American Wordsworth" and the nation's leading poet, also immersed himself in Latin American culture; he was, in fact, the first reviewer of *Jicoténcal*. A translator of the celebrated Cuban writer José María Heredia as well as the Mexican poet José Rosas Moreno, Bryant also explored the shifting boundaries between the anglophone and hispanophone Americas in both his fictional and journalistic writings.

During the same period but in very different ways, the francophone Caribbean also shaped the contours of US literary culture as well as the political destinies of some of its writers. Following the late eighteenth-century slave revolts in Saint-Domingue and the consequent emergence of Haiti as an independent republic in 1804, southern states in the US passed a series of vigilant new restrictions prohibiting the immigration of Haitians and other free people of color from the francophone Americas. Of particular concern to slaveholders were the Caribbean borders of the Orleans Territory of Louisiana. In 1837 Victor Séjour, the son of a free man of color from the former Saint-Domingue – an immigrant who had relocated to New Orleans not long before restrictions on the francophone West Indies were legislated – published the first short story of the African American tradition, "Le mulâtre." Written in French, this powerful tale played upon both the prevailing horror of slave revolt and anxieties about Haiti in its narrative of overlapping national borders and ambiguous temporalities. Séjour was also part of the collective that produced *Les Cenelles* (1845), the first African American anthology of poetry and an integral part of a flourishing francophone literary culture that has been overlooked in all but the most recent histories of US literature.³²

Yet nineteenth-century writers themselves found the interrelations among Haiti, francophonie, and alternative racial categorizations so inescapable that a shadowy series of racially indeterminate francophone or French-identified figures proliferated across the national literary landscape,

populating works ranging from Walt Whitman's early novel *Franklin Evans* (1842) to Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) to Melville's *Pierre* (1852).³³ At the same time, the history of the Haitian Revolution figured prominently in much abolitionist literature, from Stowe's novel with its ominous warnings about the terrors that might occur "if ever the San Domingo hour comes" to Wendell Phillips's poem honoring the Revolution and "Toussaint" to the first novel by an African American writer, William Wells Brown's *Clotel, or, The President's Daughter* (1853). Though Haiti never appears in the novel, Brown clearly had its history in mind, for he cites from John R. Beard's study of the Haitian Revolution in a key chapter on Clotel's arrest as a fugitive slave. Two years later, Brown issued his own history, *St. Domingo: Its Revolutions and Its Patriots* (1855), in which – in a reversal of Emerson – he fashioned Toussaint Louverture as an American revolutionary superior to his US counterpart in George Washington. Brown also lectured and published widely in support of African American emigration to Haiti and considered repatriating there himself. After the Civil War, no less a figure than Frederick Douglass – whose only work of fiction, a historical novella titled *The Heroic Slave* (1853), had conjoined the tropes of revolt to the proximity of US and Caribbean shores – served as ambassador to Haiti and wrote for the same journal Bryant had once edited, the *North American Review*, on the subject of a nation that had emerged from the only successful slave revolt in the Americas.

The three decades of US literary history treated in this study thus feature a remarkably diverse catalog of transamerican affiliations, anxieties, and practices that embraced the lives and the literary productions of its participants in striking ways and spanned an equally wide ideological range, from Lydia Maria Child, whose widely read abolitionist writings included a treatise on emancipation in the West Indies, to William Gilmore Simms, editor of the proslavery *Southern Quarterly Review* who advocated the creation of a southern empire in the Caribbean. In the same year during which Séjour published his tale of slave revolt in Saint-Domingue, Edgar Allan Poe completed *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, a novel registering expansionist designs alongside anxieties about southern slave uprisings and the potential abolition of slavery – and exemplifying his belief, as he put it one year earlier, in a proslavery review written for the *Messenger* (where he had also published two installments of *Pym*), that "recent events in the West Indies and the parallel movement here, give an awful importance to these thoughts in our minds."³⁴ Two years after the completed publication of Poe's narrative, the African American writer and reformer Nancy Prince seized upon just such "recent events," traveling to Jamaica and later producing a narrative of her life and travels that contests the genre of the West Indian travel narrative

while positioning slavery as an inter-American rather than a purely national institution.³⁵ Taking up more explicitly literary-historical concerns in his mid-century novel *Blake* (1859–62), Martin Delaney deployed a series of translated identities to foreground the hemispheric inextricability of race, colonialism, and slavery across the tangled genealogies of US and Cuban political and literary history. Before her marriage to Nathaniel Hawthorne, Sophia Peabody experienced firsthand the interlocked nature of Cuban-US slaveholding interests when she went to live on the very Morrell plantation in Cuba at which Emerson had encouraged his brother Edward to work as a tutor, and where she kept an extensive journal of impressions and drawings. Hawthorne himself, notoriously outraged by the ascendance of women writers, drew nevertheless in his fiction on an indigenous legend recorded in Frances Calderón de la Barca's account of her two voyages to Cuba and her extended sojourn in Mexico.³⁶ While Hawthorne's literary uses of Calderón register larger cultural fears about the permeability of racial and national borders, the first known Native American novel, *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta, the Celebrated California Bandit* (1854) by the Cherokee writer John Rolling Ridge, enlists indigenous myth alongside various tropes of racial indeterminacy, effectively redrawing the racial and cultural borders of the nation.³⁷ Melville, too – from his satirical responses to the US-Mexican War to his strange incantatory stories of the Central American “encantadas” or enchanted isles to the figure of the “Lima intriguante” who appears mysteriously throughout his writings – pressured the strict delineation of purely national “American” identities.³⁸ Even the most canonical of the US transcendentalists, from Emerson to Henry David Thoreau to Margaret Fuller, wrote critically about the US-Mexican War while they formulated a language of sublime transcendence exceeding national borders and often serving the ends of US imperialism.³⁹ Perhaps most famously (and notoriously), Walt Whitman called – and was repeatedly answered by writers from throughout the hemisphere who rewrote him – for an American literature that would “breathe . . . the breath recuperative of sane and heroic life” into a “hollow” United States that had “[i]n vain . . . annex'd Texas, California, Alaska” and was “reach[ing] north for Canada and south for Cuba.”⁴⁰

“AMERICAN RENAISSANCE” AND THE COMPETING PUBLIC SPHERES OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Because the last two decades of US literary studies have produced a seemingly endless stream of reconsiderations of the “American Renaissance” (a

phrase that can now hardly be evoked without a certain amount of self-consciousness), in this section I hope to clarify at least in part why I have chosen to reference the term in adapting it for the introduction to my own project. I should note first that this book concerns itself with a narrative of nineteenth-century literary history that includes not only the half-decade identified by F. O. Matthiessen as the period in which the nation was “affirming its rightful heritage in the whole expanse of art and culture,” 1850–55, but the broader span of years running roughly from the 1826 publication of *Jicoténcal* to the 1856 publication of a Haitian drama, *Ogé, ou, Le préjugé de couleur* (*Ogé, or Color Prejudice*).⁴¹ In several important ways, this study builds on the work of scholars who have explored the myths of US literary exceptionalism at the heart of the American Renaissance: myths propounded by the five canonical writers at the center of Matthiessen’s study themselves and reinscribed by a host of pre- and post-Matthiessen critics who have cast this period as the moment during which the national literature emerged as a separate and independent cultural arena, free from the imitative taint of international influence.⁴²

At the same time, these chapters collectively seek to complicate what cultural historians have come to understand as the inextricability of literary production and print culture from the consolidation of nationalism in the emergence of the modern public sphere.⁴³ If the early nineteenth century witnessed the beginnings of what Habermas saw as an ever widening institutional and aesthetic rift between the realms of public politics and belles lettres – or, as Michael Warner has argued with regard to early American literature, if “the political system and publication became specialized in a mutual separation” with “the joint triumphs of literary publishing and of nationalism in the liberal society of the nineteenth century” – the same period saw the rise of transnational abolitionist societies, anticolonialist movements, and dissident exile communities deeply invested in maintaining literature’s role in the shaping of public life and in the provocation of a transnational activist politics.⁴⁴ Reconsidered within this milieu, the foregone conclusion of nineteenth-century nationalism registered in both mainstream US literary culture and most of the criticism that has treated it begins to seem less settled. The nation as imagined by the US writers of the dominant literary public sphere that I consider here proves uneasily tied to the larger hemisphere even in its most exceptionalist incarnations.

One of the central premises of this book, in other words, is the extent to which the transamerican and multilingual literary practices of these American arenas allow us to reenvision the nineteenth-century public sphere itself as a plurality of competing and often mutually antagonistic public

spheres.⁴⁵ Of central importance to me, therefore, have been literary studies that take the risk of examining broadly geographic and diachronic cultural histories in an age that favors local historicisms.⁴⁶ Following José David Saldívar's insistence that we bring multiple "cognitive maps" to the field of US cultural studies, through which to unsettle a long tradition of equating the nation as a political state with a monolithic national identity for all of its inhabitants, this book tells just a few of the many stories of transamerican conflict and contradiction, international influence and cultural crossing, in the nineteenth-century US literary history under consideration.⁴⁷ The literary transamericanisms examined here are thus constituted as much by the various authors' actual literary practices of revision, response, and translation across national borders as by contemporaneous historical contexts or contemporary theoretical concerns.

In its focus on the relation of US writers to the wider Americas, this book inevitably risks reproducing a historiographic model in which center and periphery remain fixed points on an analytical map, its United States fulcrum counterposed against a homogenized and predictably marginal Latin America and Caribbean. Of course, transnational cultural formations do not in and of themselves provide an overarching corrective to all past and present disciplinary oversights: romanticized scholarly visions of the nation's permeable cultural borders within a decontextualized hemispheric arena of intellectual borrowing and cultural crossing only further elide the historical and political terrains originally rendered invisible within more insular national paradigms.⁴⁸ In this project, I have tried to mitigate these and related problems through a careful balance of approaches and primary sources. The main focus of the book is indeed upon the reconfiguration of a particular period of US literary history within the context of the wider nineteenth-century Americas. Yet each of my chapters also works back and forth between the diverse perspectives of its US authors and those of various writers, intellectuals, and other figures from a range of competing American public spheres: from New England, New York, and Louisiana to Port-au-Prince, Havana, Matanzas, Mexico City, and Yucatán. Within the United States' "dominant public sphere," in Habermas's phrase, Prescott's history of the Mexican conquest could be read as propaganda for the US-Mexican War, while Hawthorne could produce a presidential campaign biography of Franklin Pierce, who had served as a general in the same war. Yet Hawthorne would surely have abnegated the public political work of his own belles lettristic fiction – despite the appearance of many of his stories and sketches in the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, which regularly featured lengthy writings on the war alongside its

literary contributions. In a competing but roughly contemporaneous public sphere, a coalition of exiles from the French Caribbean produced an international journal intended to reach a similarly wide audience with its mixture of political commentary and literary production. For the collective that produced *La Revue des Colonies*, print culture would enable the mobilization of the hemisphere's own literary past and present precisely against the kinds of imperialist ideologies obtaining in the dominant (and anglophone) public sphere of the United States.

Crucially, however, the dominant US public sphere and its rivals – franco-phone and hispanophone; abolitionist and anticolonialist – often intersect: Bryant inhabits at least two of them at various points in his career, as do many of the figures treated in these pages. The book thus approaches writers such as Cooper, Douglass, and Stowe, for example, alongside and through the writings of the Martiniquian intellectual and influential editor Cyrille Bissette, the Cuban authors Domingo del Monte and Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, the Haitian dramatist and educator Pierre Faubert, the anonymous hispanophone exile who produced *Jicoténcal*, and the Bermudan oral autobiographer Mary Prince. The insights afforded by these latter writers develop out of the particular national histories, local politics, and reading communities that shaped their works, which in turn yield a number of occluded trajectories within the period of US literary history covered here. Yet if this book argues for the compelling narratives and insights that can emerge from such cross-cultural juxtaposition and exchange, it resists celebrating its own transamerican public spheres at the cost of euphemizing their underlying political motivations – either outside the United States or within it. In fact, the chapters that follow often reveal the ways in which literary transnationalism and the operations of imperialism can go hand in hand: to take a particularly blunt example from the *North American Review*, an 1849 article on the poetry of “Spanish America” charges its US readers with “a patriotic duty” to learn Latin American literary traditions given “the indefinite boundaries of our country” and all “the mysterious tropical nations, with whom it is [our] ‘manifest destiny’ . . . to be more and more closely connected.”⁴⁹

It would be irresponsible, to say the least, to claim extensive expertise in the Latin American and Caribbean traditions from which I have sought alternative perspectives in this project. Yet as a scholar of US literary studies whose initial training was in African American literature, I have become increasingly aware of how my own research and teaching have been usefully challenged by insights originating beyond the national and anglophone borders of my primary fields of investigation. From these

angles, my study turns its lens back upon the particular period of US literary history under consideration rather than allowing that period's intense cultural nationalism to generate all the questions I ask. I have conceived of this book not as a foray into nineteenth-century literature of the Americas from a US perspective, in other words, but as precisely the reverse: a reconsideration of nineteenth-century US literary history from vantage points within the wider Americas, from knowledges produced beyond the federal and territorial borders of the United States itself. These knowledges share important features with what Walter D. Mignolo has recently termed "border gnosis," or "knowledge production from both the interior borders of the modern/colonial world system (imperial conflicts, hegemonic languages, directionality of translations, etc.) and its exterior borders (imperial conflicts with cultures being colonized, as well as the subsequent stages of independence or decolonization)."⁵⁰ Rather than "centers, peripheries, and semiperipheries," the modern/colonial world system theorized by Mignolo emphasizes the "internal and external borders" that constitute a "continuum in colonial expansion and in changes of national imperial hegemonies."⁵¹

The nineteenth-century Americas play an axial role in the trajectory of border gnosis as Mignolo defines it, a period in which imperial powers (Spain, France, England, increasingly the United States) contested territories and islands in the hemisphere, imposing linguistic and cultural purities yet remaining unable to control either the pace of decolonization and revolution or the mobility of intellectual labor and translation within its competing public spheres. From the *del Monte* salon of Matanzas, Cuba, to the subversive Spanish-language publishing centers in Philadelphia and New York, from the cross-cultural exchanges of the renowned *Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística* to the disputed Texas Territory where US soldiers read Prescott in preparation for war, from the exiled intellectuals of Haiti and Martinique who comprised the *Société des Hommes de Couleur* to the francophone Creole culture of Louisiana, emerges a period of "transamerican renaissance" represented in this study through a group of thematically, historically, and often intertextually related works whose rooted localities nevertheless manifest the pressure of their hemispheric relations to a wider, distinctly transnational nineteenth-century public sphere.

As the Prologue has noted, this book takes for its historical parameters the 1826 Congress of Panama, a foundational manifestation of a hemispheric political consciousness, and the failed 1856 occupation of Nicaragua

under the direction of William Walker, the Anglo militant ideologue who attempted to establish slavery as the political and economic basis for what was briefly a Central American colony of the United States. Attending to the three decades that lie between, I treat only peripherally those later (and, in many cases, more familiar to US-Americanists) Latin American and Caribbean writers – Octavio Paz and José Martí, for example – whose works converse powerfully across the span of a half-century or more with US authors of the nineteenth century. Remaining for the most part within this early nineteenth-century historical framework, the book thus responds to an implicit assumption in the various fields of comparative American or “New World” studies that has often been assumed as fact: that literary transnationalism in the Americas and the critical perspectives it invites are natural outgrowths of the massive human migrations, urban pluralism, and cultural globalization the hemisphere has witnessed over the course of the twentieth century.⁵² Yet many of the literary configurations envisioned in current studies as predominantly and even inherently tied to the twentieth century were in fact addressed by writers in the Americas as explicit questions and problems well before the modern and contemporary periods to which they have largely been consigned. To take perhaps the most familiar example, as early as the 1880s, we find in the writings of Martí what Jeffrey Belnap and Raúl Fernández observe is “a precursor of the new American cultural studies in [their] persistent rearticulations of the triangulated cultural relationships between Europe and its various lines of imperial descent in America.”⁵³ Even Martí, however, has often been claimed for the twentieth century: though the Cuban intellectual published his best-known work in the 1880s and 1890s and died in 1895, the editors of the recent *José Martí Reader* envision his writings “at the crossroads of an entirely new world order,” harbingers of “the Age of Modernity” by an intellectual “able to see and foresee, to write and speak the signs of both his age and the future.”⁵⁴

But the nineteenth century is as much the legacy of earlier transnational formations as the forerunner of later ones, as the scholarship of early Americanists on the zones of contact inhabited by various European colonial cultures, indigenous Americans, and African slaves throughout the Americas readily attests.⁵⁵ By the late eighteenth century, Philip Freneau and Joel Barlow had introduced Latin American historical tableaux into the national literary imagination, attempting to shore up Anglo-American predominance in the hemisphere even as they inevitably blurred the geographical and cultural contours of the national literature.⁵⁶ It should thus go

without saying that nineteenth-century literary cultures possessed their own transnationalist aspirations and affiliations, many of which emerged from the various spheres of early transatlantic cultural transmission explored by Paul Giles, Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, and others.⁵⁷ As Kirsten Silva Gruesz wryly notes, moreover, the recent stress upon transnational perspectives in US literary studies comes as a kind of reinvented wheel that Latin Americanists have long taken for granted.⁵⁸

The title of this introductory chapter is thus intended to acknowledge that literary renaissance in the Americas was hardly a US phenomenon alone but a broad early nineteenth-century self-consciousness of various new and rising American literary scenes, which were inextricable from emergent nationalisms even as their respective writers were often engaging in conversation and contest across national and colonial boundaries in the hemisphere. The phrase “transamerican renaissance” is thus intended not only to suggest the elided transnational contexts of a designated period of US literary history, but also to evoke a broad complex of relations between the literary public sphere of Matthiessen’s New England and a few of the other cultural moments of self-perceived renaissance across the Americas during the same years, from the hispanophone-exile literary communities of 1820s Philadelphia and New York, to the “golden age” of reformist literature in Cuba during the 1830s and 1840s, to the *Le Républicain* and *L’Union* writers of the Ignace Nau *cénacle* in 1830s Haiti, to the *L’Album littéraire* and *Les Cenelles* circle of Creole writers of color in New Orleans in the 1840s, to the landmark publication at mid-century of the monthly literary and historical periodical *El Museo Yucateco* in Campeche, Mexico. These competing public spheres, and their attendant communities of authors and readers, provide the most compelling justification for retaining something of the dissenting spirit of Matthiessen’s term “American Renaissance.” It could be said, in other words, that the nationally delimited efforts of US-Americanists to dismantle the very notion of an American Renaissance have come in part at the expense of other literary traditions and movements in the Americas whose participants saw themselves enacting comparable moments of cultural renaissance that they understood as inextricable from the political spheres that defined their public lives. And while the American Renaissance of the United States proves in many cases (though, crucially, not in all of them) inseparable from imperialist sensibilities and expansionist projects of various kinds, in many of its other American sites – in Havana, in Haiti, in Mexico – transamerican renaissance was often coextensive with the very kinds of anti-imperialist critiques guiding the most challenging provocations to the study of US literature in recent years.

DIACHRONY, GENEALOGY, REVISIONISM: PHILLIS WHEATLEY
TO OCTAVIO PAZ

Nearly twenty years ago, the Anglo-Guyanese writer Wilson Harris conceived of taking such wider historical views as a means of engendering what he termed "the cross-cultural imagination," a critical orientation that opposes "homogeneity . . . as a cultural model" for the study of literary relations. When "exercised by a ruling ethnic group," Harris argued, such homogeneity "tends to become an organ of conquest and division because of *imposed* unity that actually subsists on the suppression of others." In a brilliant exploration of the US novel within its hemispheric arena, he traced this oppositional "cross-cultural capacity" by exploring what he viewed as "the evolutionary thrust it restores to orders of the imagination, the ceaseless dialogue it inserts between hardened conventions and eclipsed or half-eclipsed otherness, within an intuitive self that moves endlessly into flexible patterns, arcs or bridges of community."⁵⁹

In this spirit, a central hypothesis that has emerged collectively from the chapters of this book is that the very conception of the American Renaissance, tied as it has always been to a cultural moment of intense national self-consciousness, is inherently dependent upon and sustained not only by nationalist discourses but by the underlying transnational desires and anxieties that such discourses seek to mask. It was precisely those writers originally associated with the American Renaissance who most explicitly sought to locate themselves as forebears and descendants within particular literary genealogies that they understood as coextensive with the nation. But the imaginary lines of descent they constructed for themselves as writers were of course fundamentally tangled, their confusion betrayed by their own anxieties of origin as revealed in the very metaphors they chose for the national literary product. Melville exhorted the nation to nurture its literary "foundlings" despite their unknown parentage, to take "kith and kin of her own" "to her bosom" and "not lavish her embraces upon the household of an alien."⁶⁰ Whitman urged readers to search for the "birthmarks" of "first-class" texts since "born poetry" was "the topmost proof of a race."⁶¹ Hawthorne fretted that the women writers whom he figured as "ink-stained Amazons" would introduce mixture into the "tottering infancy" of the national literature.⁶² Perhaps their contemporary Margaret Fuller put their concerns most directly when she warned that "till the fusion of races among us is more complete . . . all attempts to construct a national literature must end in abortions."⁶³ The national literary offspring these writers envisioned, in other words, were not merely orphaned by the so-called death of the

author but of mixed and ambiguous racial origins, or of unknown parentage entirely.

These anxiously amalgamated figurations of national literary reproduction belie the ancestral literary purity that writers such as Emerson and Hawthorne sought to establish through their own works as much as they trouble the homogeneous lines of descent propounded in exceptionalist (and monolingual) narratives of US literary history. Yet as Margaret Cohen and Carolyn Dever have recently observed, the discernment of “inter- and transnational cultural formations poses a particular challenge to literary scholars, even comparatists, given the power of national identification as the logic organizing literary history since the nineteenth century.”⁶⁴ Genealogy may thus be more suited to addressing the accidental crossings, chance encounters, and fortuitous juxtapositions that constitute the history of transamerican literary relations during this period than literary history traditionally understood, with its predetermined chronologies, transparent causalities, and nationalist mythologies.⁶⁵ Situating each text and each set of literary relations within and across a range of multilingual and often antagonistic strands of cultural production rather than affiliating them solely with a single national tradition or dominant public sphere, this book traces the transamerican genealogies that permeate the thirty-year period of transamerican renaissance that is its subject: literary representations of familial genealogies whose crossing branches expose ambiguity and mixture at the ostensible site of origin; literary appropriations of historical genealogies that oppose the assumptions of nationalist historiography; and, most crucially, authorial practices of affiliation and contestation that determine the shape of literary genealogies, of textual inheritance and tradition. In the diverse array of genealogical narratives examined here, the lines of race and nation alike inevitably cross, overlap, and blur, revealing the surprising and dramatic ways in which various American identities give shape to one another. Replete with hidden sexual relations and secret or ambiguous ancestors, with obscure or unacknowledged historical documents and marginal accounts of the past, with elided textual sources and little-known authorial kinships, the writings I examine here construct a network of transamerican genealogies either produced or altered through interracial revisions and cross-cultural translations – as well as through travel writings and foreign readings, multilingual editors and international correspondences, chronological contingencies and historical simultaneities – revealing the inevitable impurity of all cultural descent no matter how strenuously imagined as the inheritance of a national literary birthright.

On a more basic level, the chapters that follow offer comparative cultural readings that more or less synchronically reconsider the contours of nineteenth-century US literary history by counterposing various hemispherically American points of view. This approach necessarily foregrounds the ways in which we might alternatively organize our narratives of nineteenth-century literature – so often consolidated by the Civil War as the defining event of the national imagination – through a different but integrally related series of historical moments: the 1521 Spanish Conquest of Mexico, the revolutions of Saint-Domingue in the period 1791–1804, the Louisiana legislation passed in 1806 prohibiting the entry of Haitians and other free people of color from the francophone Caribbean, the spread of independence from Spain throughout Latin America beginning in 1825, the failure of the United States to attend the first Pan American Congress in 1826, the violent slave revolts of the 1830s in New Orleans, the 1844 conspiracy known as the Escalera in Cuba, the 1835 war between Mexico and an Anglo-dominated Texas, the US-Mexican War of 1846–48, the ascendancy of *mulâtre* rule in Haiti in 1820 and the ensuing years of *mulâtre-noir* strife, and the apex of US imperial designs on Cuba and the larger hemisphere during the 1850s. The synchronic readings offered in these chapters take up these and other historical moments, arguing collectively that an investigation of the transnational simultaneity of literary events in the Americas will illuminate certain underlying hemispheric problematics that might otherwise remain obscured.

At the same time, I have also tried to excavate some of the alternative literary and political trajectories that can emerge from diachronic genealogies of transamerican literary history located in cross-cultural, international, and translingual relationships of literary influence. The eighteenth-century author Phillis Wheatley, for example, is not known for an abiding concern with the implications of slavery in the wider American hemisphere. But when we examine the French translations of her poetry that appear in a journal produced by a group of nineteenth-century Caribbean “hommes de couleur,” we find surprising alterations to her text that argue for Wheatley’s political engagement in an international colonial arena. It may seem counterintuitive as well to argue that Hawthorne’s short fiction is in any way engaged with Mexico and the politics of US imperialism in the Americas. But when we look at the conflicting responses published in nineteenth-century Mexico City newspapers to one of his main sources, and then examine Octavio Paz’s rewriting of his story “Rappaccini’s Daughter” a century after its initial publication as an allegory of the Mexican Conquest, Hawthorne’s relation to the wider Americas

emerges as a significant dimension of the period's canonical literary history. Transamerican literary relations can thus span vast and diverse historical sweeps. The hemispheric implications of particular works sometimes emerge only when they are rewritten decades after the fact by authors working from within very different American public spheres, often writing in other languages. In the broadest sense, then, this book attempts to reveal a series of diachronic trajectories for a period of literary history that often drew its own lines of authorial influence and descent strictly inside the territorial and anglophone borders of its national imaginary.

Scattered traditions: the transamerican genealogies of Jicoténcal

In 1826 a small press in the northeastern United States released a novel whose historical themes suggested to its readership the influence of the British author Walter Scott. Writing about the novel the following year for the *United States Review and Literary Gazette*, William Cullen Bryant made lengthy reference to “the author of ‘Waverly’” and the political capacities of historical fiction before moving on to the specific background of the 1826 narrative he was reviewing.¹ The novel revived the prenational American scene of an earlier century, drawing on the rhetoric and imagery of the New World Eden while treating a series of violent battles between European imperial and indigenous armies. Within various subplots coalescing around interindigenous conflicts and secret pacts, this historical narrative featured two women descended from Scott’s archetypal fair and dark ladies, one pure and the other tainted, opposing symbolic moral registers of innocence and an imposed guilt. A story of interracial male alliances and cross-cultural struggles for possession of the fair lady, the novel’s central focus upon the capture and potential violation of its female characters coincided with a popular interest throughout the United States in the theme of captivity. Yet the ultimate marriage of the fair lady to her appropriate male counterpart was secondary to the narrative’s larger project: to document the alleged passing of a particular historical moment for indigenous America – and to recommend a clear political order for the future. As Bryant wryly observed, “By means of reflections arising naturally out of his subject, delicate allusions, inferences rather suggested than drawn, and speeches put into the mouths of his personages, artfully suited to their characters and to the circumstances in which they are placed, a popular author may do much for his favorite opinions.”²

For many readers, the work I have invoked at the outset of this chapter on the nineteenth-century American literary past will likely be recognizable as James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Last of the Mohicans*, a novel of frontier experience set during the French and Indian War. The first major US

novelist and an international celebrity in his own moment, Cooper was lauded for appropriating the form of the historical romance he had inherited from Scott and infusing it with literary material native to North America, thereby contributing to the beginnings of a truly national tradition, and earning his status as what Melville called “our national novelist.” Central to the tradition that he helped to shape was a cluster of repeating figures and foundational narratives: the frontier hero and the violent plotlines of cross-cultural encounter in which he prevails; the homosocial escape from civilization through interracial friendships between men and its attendant discourse of ethnic inheritance; the tropes of the loyal and noble savage as well as the brutal and treacherous “Red Man,” from whom mother and child are never safe; the lament for the vanishing Indian, relegated to the past through the elegiac language of history, which ensures the disappeared status of its subject.

Yet the novel that I describe above was not in fact written by Cooper, despite a surprising number of thematic and narrative elements that it shares with *The Last of the Mohicans*. In fact, Bryant never reviewed that particular Cooper novel, complaining to his editor Richard Henry Dana that the Leatherstocking author was “too sensitive a creature for me to touch.”³ Perhaps this explains part of Bryant’s willingness to approach the historical novel that he *did* review that year: unlike the book by Cooper, it was published anonymously. Released under the title *Jicoténcal* from the William Staveland Publishing House in Philadelphia, the novel Bryant reviewed in the pages of the *United States Review* is still relatively little known in the context of US literary studies, though it holds an important place in the early literary history of Latin America because it constitutes what some scholars continue to promote as the earliest Spanish-language historical novel of the Americas as well as the hemisphere’s first known *indigenista* fiction, the first hispanophone text to take up indigenous themes with sympathy for the native point of view.⁴ For these and other reasons, *Jicoténcal* has proved to be a culturally *valuable* work, a transference object of multiple national desires and projections, for its enduring genealogical significance within the literary history of the nineteenth-century Americas.

Set during the Spanish Conquest of Mexico under Hernán Cortés, the novel is named for Xicoténcatl the Younger, a historical general in the army of the indigenous Tlaxcalans, who became allies of the Spaniards against the Aztec emperor Moctezuma. *Jicoténcal* fictionalizes the events leading up to this historical alliance, which it casts as the initial tragedy that brought about the eventual outcome of the conquest. The novel begins with Cortés’s treacherous capture of the eponymous hero’s beloved, the beautiful Teutila,

with whom both the brutal Spanish captain and his upstanding soldier Diego de Ordaz become infatuated. Within this triangle of desire for Teutila, Cortés's mistress Doña Marina appears first as a menacing femme fatale, seducing the virtuous Ordaz and then attempting to ensnare the even more virtuous Jicoténcal, until her pregnancy by Cortés is revealed. All the characters but Teutila figure prominently in a number of seventeenth-century Spanish chronicles of the conquest, though the Spanish historians' estimations of them differ radically from those proposed in the novel. Indeed, the political story that embeds this domestic plot figures Jicoténcal as a patriot of indigenous America against the cruel tyranny of Spain: staunchly opposing the proposed alliance with the *conquistadores*, he unsuccessfully enjoins his fellow Tlaxcalan soldiers to thwart the Spaniards' progress through Mexico. At the novel's close, Marina gives birth to a son and repents for her earlier betrayal of the indigenous Americans, Teutila commits suicide after Jicoténcal has been killed in battle with the Spaniards, and Cortés makes ready to continue his conquest in Tenochtitlán, now Mexico City.

Like Cooper's novel, then, *Jicoténcal* makes use of historical writings for the literary depiction of a romantic national prehistory, one that in turn encodes apparent commentary upon the present and future state of the Americas. Unlike *The Last of the Mohicans*, however, *Jicoténcal* never became a great national novel, remaining instead the contested object of a number of discrepant historiographical narratives enabled by the mysterious circumstances of its production and reception. Written in Spanish, published anonymously in Philadelphia, and focused upon the violent histories of the Americas, *Jicoténcal*'s national status has provoked speculation since its initial publication. From Bryant's first review in 1827 through our own moment, literary critics and historians have sought to resolve what one scholar has recently termed "*El enigma de Jicoténcal*" – and in the process have staked multiple claims of authorial identity and by extension nationality upon the novel.⁵ The set of competing genealogical narratives made possible by its anonymity is perhaps the novel's most fascinating legacy, far more compelling in its diverse implications than any empirically established lineage could have been.

This chapter begins by considering *Jicoténcal* within its own historical moment, pondering what a Spanish-language and avowedly anti-imperialist novel might have contributed to contemporaneous debates in the US public sphere in the years immediately before and after the Congress of Panama in 1826. I then try to unravel some of the most significant strands of the scholarly debate surrounding the novel's authorship, a debate that highlights the

dialectical status of this genre as both a nationalist “foundational fiction,” to borrow Doris Sommer’s phrase, and an “international invention,” as others have recently theorized it.⁶ The controversy over *Jicoténcal*’s authorial and national origin thus registers the novel’s exemplary status as a historical artifact of the transamerican nineteenth century that is the subject of this book. A text of continually shifting national parentage, *Jicoténcal* has been attributed to authors claimed simultaneously for Mexican, Cuban, and, most recently, US literary history, generating a layered and truly international critical inheritance, a repository of interweaving genealogies rooted in a particular nineteenth-century transamerican scene that emerges in tension with the national traditions that many critics have enlisted the novel in shaping. Reading *Jicoténcal* against and through its canonical, anglophone contemporary, *The Last of the Mohicans*, I consider two opposing views of hemispheric relations that characterized the 1820s, literary visions crystallized in the very different relationships to historical sources and the historiography of the Americas cultivated in the novels. The chapter turns finally to a lineal descendant of both novels, William Hickling Prescott’s popular and critically acclaimed *History of the Conquest of Mexico* (1843), to examine a number of arguments about the nature of national and historical understanding sustained in 1840s literary periodicals covering Prescott’s work and the Mexican Conquest more generally. As we shall see, the literary-historical and fictional representations of the Mexican Conquest explored in this chapter register a dramatic shift in US views of hemispheric relations that occurred between the 1820s and 1840s: a change from a climate of inter-American affiliation and exchange to a transamerican arena of projection and denial – of occluded crossings, repressed kinships, and displaced imperial desires.

THE WRITING(S) OF 1826

From the first appearance of *Jicoténcal* in 1826, it was impossible not to see that the anonymous novel from Philadelphia offered a critical commentary upon its own historical moment within Latin American history. The narrative’s unequivocal denunciation of early modern Spanish imperialism and its celebration of indigenous Mexican patriotism evoked the widespread revolutions against Spain throughout the hispanophone Americas in the early 1820s, perhaps most significantly in Mexico, where putative independence from the European empire had been granted in 1821 and a federal republic established in 1823. At the same time, *Jicoténcal*

appeared just as the nations of the Americas were assembling for the first time at the Congress of Panama to address the shared opportunities, grievances, and foreign threats faced by the hemisphere. Initially available to northeastern readers alongside widespread US avowals of moral and political support for these newly independent nations during the early 1820s, *Jicoténcal* emerged within a climate of intense North American enthusiasm for the ideals of hemispheric solidarity and inter-American cooperation.

US literary and political periodicals published during these years jubilantly reviewed various Latin American works relating to independence in the Americas and the upcoming Congress of Panama, a meeting hailed in advance as “among the most remarkable events of political history,” “with no prototype in the annals either of ancient or modern story.”⁷ “A hemisphere of the globe,” as one commentator saw it in pan-American terms, “has become freed from the yoke of bondage, by hard struggles and by an energy, which only the spirit of freedom could inspire.”⁸ Reviewing the publication in Lima of Bernardo Monteagudo’s *Ensayo sobre la necesidad de una federación general entre los estados hispanoamericanos, y plan de su organizacion* (*An Essay on the Necessity of a General Federation of Spanish-American States, and a Plan for its Organization*), a polemic that urged the organized cooperation of the new Spanish-American nations, a contributor to the *North American Review* pointedly aligned Monteagudo’s work with the *Federalist* writings of John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison, encompassing both works within a history of politico-literary transamericanism that bound the United States and the wider Americas together in a mutual spirit of “national intercourse” that stretched across the hemisphere.⁹ Not surprisingly, then, many of the articles covering Latin America during this period assumed a certain fluency in Spanish on the part of their readers. Providing no English translations for ubiquitous Spanish-language citations, these writers explicitly reminded US readers that their own history, as a part of the larger history of the “New World,” was “inseparably associated with [the Spanish] language and literature”: “We must look to that language for the only original and perfectly authentic records of [Columbus] as well as for the knowledge of later events in the history of this continent.”¹⁰ Underscoring the inherent multilingualism of the American world, as well as the broadly hemispheric meanings of the term “America” itself, one review praised the proliferation of translated documents relating to early European explorers, opining that “every American, whatever language he may speak” owes a certain debt to Columbus.¹¹ “Should the great cause of American freedom be assailed, whether at the north or the south,”

the *North American Review* alleged, “the people of the United States will be ready to take up arms, and unite with all the friends of liberty on the continent, in defence of their common rights.”¹²

A similar rhetorical position characterizes the first review of *Jicoténcal*. Bryant “cannot give [the novel] the praise of being very skillfully contrived, although it is written with about the same degree of talent as the mass of modern works of the kind.” However, “on account of its belonging to the Spanish literature of America,” Bryant finds it inherently worthy of notice, interpreting the narrative’s “just and enlightened notions on political government” through the struggles of the “Patriots” in the “territories of Spanish America” to throw off their “despotic masters” – and, more significantly, through the similarity between these struggles and those of “our own Revolution.”¹³ In fact, Bryant’s review of the novel is also a meditation on the currents of cultural and political exchange that cross the Americas, where each “people . . . struggling for its liberties” is shaped by “the relation in which it stands to the nations that surround it.” A colony “sends out its inquiries, observes and compares the institutions of other nations, and profits by the lessons,” he contends; and when it finally rises up against the imperial power, “a class of adventurers from other countries enroll themselves under the banners of the nation that fights for freedom,” and their foreign virtues are in turn “admired and copied” and “impress something of their character upon the nation.” Modeling this process for the rest of the Americas, the United States offers what can never be “too much of our sympathy . . . to an oppressed and suffering people” – thereby enacting a transmission of “moral qualities” that catalyzes a dialectic of progress and freedom for the entire American hemisphere.¹⁴

As Bryant’s review suggests, the popular rhetoric of New World fellowship that characterized the aftermath of the Spanish American revolutions depended largely upon the well-publicized notion that the newly liberated Latin American nations had been following – and would continue to follow – the democratically federated model ostensibly embodied in the United States. The Monroe Doctrine, issued three years before the publication of *Jicoténcal*, was to offer the young Spanish American states the protection of their shining neighbor to the north, a self-perceived paragon of liberty and enlightenment. Amid all the ebullient discussion of hemispheric solidarity, in other words, lay the premise that nineteenth-century Latin American governments and histories were unfolding not only “in imitation of the United States,” but in what promised to be both an abstract and practical deferral to its inherent superiority. Yet Latin American political leaders did not always share this position on the matter of the Anglo-American

style of government. Perhaps most notoriously, Simón Bolívar was openly skeptical of the US model of federal government as well as of its political and economic interests in the Spanish-American states.¹⁵ Bolívar staunchly opposed the attendance of US representatives at the Congress of Panama – though Mexico, that much closer to the Anglo-American realm, chose to extend an invitation to its northern neighbor.

Accordingly, *Jicoténcal* appeared in Philadelphia when the US government was planning its ultimately abortive mission to the Congress of Panama in Central America. Opinions about the upcoming Congress varied widely in the United States, but even in those journalistic writings that adopted the most glowing tones of hemispheric solidarity, an undercurrent of suspicion suggested that the political stakes of official rather than purely rhetorical alliance with Latin America might prove too high. The Spanish-American governments, after all, had already made public much of the meeting's controversial agenda: to take up the question of liberating the Spanish colonial territories of Cuba and Puerto Rico by force; and to decide upon political and commercial relations with Haiti, still unrecognized as an independent government. In the same breath in which the US literary elite promised to "take up arms . . . with all . . . the continent," it warned against "participat[ing] in any measures of war" that might jeopardize "our friendly relations with Old Spain."¹⁶

More telling still, perhaps, was the exalted status that Columbus and other Spanish conquerors held in the same Anglo-American publications that purported to celebrate the recent independence of Latin America from Spain. If Spanish-American liberty flattered US national identity and its sense of preeminence in a "free" continent, the Spanish Conquest of the Americas also played a crucial role in the dominant cultural narrative of the nation's past – and, by the 1840s, of its future. A long 1827 article from the *North American Review*, for example, surveyed Fernandez de Navarrete's lengthy volumes of research on Columbus, *Colección de los Viajes y Descubrimientos*, in order to evoke the "lively interest and deep sympathy in the fortunes . . . of that extraordinary man [which] his connexion with our own hemisphere demand[s] of us as Americans."¹⁷ Castigating Navarrete's writing for ostensibly absolving King Ferdinand of the "truly monstrous injuries" that he made "the exalted character" of Columbus to suffer, the review simultaneously claimed the Spanish-language *Colección* as a "great national work," one that "certainly pertain[s] to us as much as to Spain" and deemed it "peculiarly proper" that "these papers should be translated and published in America."¹⁸ Urging some willing US hispanist to "[l]et these interesting documents be published *here*," the article drew

the subject of the Conquest into an explicit contest of national literary and historical prowess: "We should be mortified to have it directly stated, that we do less as a nation for the cause of letters, and of our own history, than the government of Spain, whose liberality and literary propensities we are not in the habit of extolling."¹⁹

This desire to claim the documents of the New World Conquest as a foundational part of the national literary history reveals the extent to which early US writers themselves understood a definitive relation between literature and imperial power. The first article on Navarrete makes this especially clear when explaining the "discovery" of the New World as a direct result of the "golden tide" of Spanish literature in the sixteenth century – "of poetry, of romance, of productions in every branch of letters": "Hence, their literature abounds in works on the early history of the New World." For the writer of this review, it is no coincidence that "[n]ot a few of the adventurous voyagers and undaunted soldiers, who first explored this continent, and bore the Spanish arms in triumph over its broad expanse, were themselves accomplished writers, who described their own fortunes and the exploits of their compatriots in the frank, simple, and engaging style of brave men, schooled in the toils of the camp and the vicissitudes of active life."²⁰

Conquest thus cultivates its own literary aesthetic – frank, simple, and engaging. Early Anglo-American identification with this aesthetic – and investment in its place within the national body of belles lettres – produced a self-conscious interdependence between literary practice and the military action metonymically registered in "the toils of the camp": an interdependence that would structure an important tradition within subsequent US literature and history. Indeed, it is not hard to see now how Anglo-American fascination with the Spanish Conquest held the seeds of US imperialism. As one 1827 writer put it, "Whatever relates to the first discoveries and early history of the New World, is every day becoming an object of deeper curiosity." The same cultural climate in which US writers hailed independent Mexico as "a country . . . which promises at no distant period to hold an eminent rank among the nations of the earth" also nourished the development of expansionist designs out of this "new and increasing interest" in "the political resources and conditions" of Mexico, "its population, revenue, agriculture, manufactures, commerce" – "and military force."²¹

Published in Philadelphia in the year of the Congress of Panama, *Jicoténcal* embraced the revolutionary, hemispheric sensibility of the 1820s while refuting many of the contradictory premises registered in the north-eastern US public sphere. At the most general level, the anonymous novel provided a devastating rebuttal to the celebratory rhetoric of New World

Conquest that characterized the dominant US literary scene and the ambition of many of its writers to claim a foundational place for the Spanish chroniclers of an exalted and heroic Columbus within the national literary past. Indeed, the opening sentences of *Jicoténcal* invoke the explorations of Columbus and his successors as “the invasions of half-savage barbarians who, abandoning their lairs and their thankless country, had taken possession of more beneficent climes, destroying their ancient inhabitants.” The ensuing narrative is devoted to documenting the atrocities of the Mexican Conquest under Cortés as the particular history of “one beautiful part of America” – a single strand, the narrator makes clear, within the larger narrative of historical crimes that constitute the “fateful book of destiny” in the New World (7).

At the same time, *Jicoténcal* responded critically to the assumption of Latin American cultural indebtedness to an exemplary Anglo-American model of democratically federated government. Long before the inception of any US political history, the novel argued, the indigenous “Republic of Tlaxcala” provided the future nations of Latin America with a venerable ancestral legacy of noble political philosophy and a narrative of revolutionary sensibility both evoking and rivaling that of the Boston Tea Party: the indigenous republic boasted a “national spirit . . . so determined that, when [its people] lacked salt, they preferred to live deprived of this condiment rather than enjoy it by establishing commercial ties with their enemies” (9).²² More striking, the Tlaxcalan nation described in *Jicoténcal* is built upon “una república confederada,” which the anonymous author clearly sought to promote as a viable governmental model. It is worth noting here that the historical Tlaxcala was in fact not even so much a nation-state as a collection of otherwise unrelated cities connected through a military federation of enmity against the Mexica.²³ Though Cortés himself had compared these Tlaxcalan cities, inaccurately, to “the free republics of Genoa or Venice,” the author of *Jicoténcal* appears to have had a different comparison of statehoods in mind, and goes into specific detail in projecting Tlaxcala as a great “confederated republic”: “sovereign power dwelt in a congress or senate, composed of elected members . . . executive and judicial power were to be found among the chiefs or caciques from the parties or districts which nevertheless were subordinate to the congress; though the congress, in judicial cases, also permitted appeals of its sentences” (8). What this fascinating passage suggests, in other words, is the author’s argument for nothing less than a Tlaxcalan model and precedent for the separation of powers that would later be realized in the US constitution: legislative, executive, and judicial powers reside in three discrete federal branches, protecting the rights of citizens from the unlimited power of any one elected individual

or governmental body. The author even describes a specifically Tlaxcalan system of checks and balances through which each federal branch delimits the sovereignty of the other. *Jicoténcal* thus effectively countered the narrative prevailing in the US public sphere of its own national constitution as a model of democratically federated government for the hemisphere's newly liberated Spanish-American nations, envisioning instead a specifically Mexican and more broadly Latin American heritage of federated republicanism located not in the "just and enlightened notions on political government" supposedly "admired and copied" from the United States – as Bryant put it – but in what it casts as an older, native system, an indigenous model that preceded the Conquest itself.²⁴

Finally, *Jicoténcal* pursues what it constructs throughout the narrative as a native historical perspective against the grain of an Anglo-American literary scene that persistently envisioned the inevitable disappearance of the hemisphere's indigenous cultures in a naturalized course of events. "The native races of Guanahani, Cuba, Hayti, Jamaica, have vanished like the dew of the morning," observed the second article on the Navarrete *Colección* in the *North American Review*.²⁵ Such gently aestheticized similes were of course commonplace during a period in which mainstream Anglo-American literature invented and reinvented Indian removals and extinctions as part of an organic civilizing process occurring across the hemisphere. Yet the literary corollary to these removals was an abiding preoccupation with the place of indigenous accounts in the production of the very hemispheric histories that were understood to occupy a crucial place in the founding of a national US literature. This becomes clear, for example, in an 1828 review of Domingo Juarros's account of pre-Conquest Central America, which sharply denigrates the Latin American historian for his interpolations of a number of indigenous historical writings:

Our author relates these facts on the authority of manuscript histories, by caciques of the Quiche, Kachiquel, and other Indians, who, like the son of Montezuma in Mexico, and the Inca Garcilasso in Peru, busied themselves after they were made acquainted with the Spanish language, in the melancholy duty of recording and preserving the traditions, whether fabulous or true, of their ancient victories, and their departed grandeur and independence. Our readers would not thank us for our pains, if we should attempt to narrate the petty wars and civil vicissitudes, of which the history is thus obtained. The absurd story related by several of the Indian caciques, ascribing the origin of their race to the dispersed ten tribes of Israel, would shake our faith in the whole of the early traditional history of Guatemala, were not the main facts confirmed by other evidence less capable of error and distortion, than mere scattered traditions.²⁶

In marked contrast to such self-conscious excising of indigenous voice and memory, *Jicoténcal* insisted on the place of past (though arguably at the expense of present and ongoing) native histories within its account of the Americas, postulating an oppositional point of view vis-à-vis the same imperial chronicles on which it skeptically drew. At the same time, invoking the term “American” to designate its native protagonists throughout the novel, *Jicoténcal* opposed an emergent narrative of US exceptionalism and predominance over the hemisphere, and propounded instead a pan-American consciousness that embraced the different and often conflicting indigenous nations – the “mere scattered traditions” – of pre-Conquest Mexico in a historical allegory that bespoke the perils of failed inter-American alliance in the early nineteenth century.

HISPANOPHILIA AND EXCEPTIONALISM: *JICOTÉNCAL* AND/IN EXILE

Like its own narrative allegory, the history of *Jicoténcal*’s reception uncannily recapitulates the transamerican exigencies of its originary moment. As the novel’s first reviewer, Bryant appears to have assumed Mexican authorship, for he compares the “series of sanguinary wars with the natives” by which the “territories of Spanish America” were initially colonized to the “long and bloody” struggles that had recently “emancipated” them from Spain: “The author of ‘*Jicoténcal*’ seems to have made ample allowance for the partiality of his countrymen in their views of the character of Cortés.”²⁷ Bryant understood the novel in the context of Mexico’s recent independence, in other words, and attributed the author’s negative depictions of Cortés to the ostensible bias of his Mexican “countrymen,” a “partiality” that conflated the sixteenth-century Spaniards with the Spanish imperial forces that Mexico had recently vanquished. Appearing in the new republic soon after its release in the United States, *Jicoténcal* spawned a series of Mexican-authored adaptations of its themes and characters that would indeed help to shape a period within the national literature of the nineteenth century.²⁸ By 1939 John Lloyd Read’s study, *The Mexican Historical Novel, 1826–1910*, would include *Jicoténcal* as the first historical fiction of the national literary tradition, as did Castro Leal’s 1964 study of the novel in colonial Mexico.²⁹ Recent studies of Mexican literature have followed suit, specialists continuing through the 1990s to describe *Jicoténcal* as the first Mexican historical novel, a foundational text in the national tradition.³⁰

Yet the alleged Mexican genealogy of *Jicoténcal* has not gone uncontested in Latin American literary studies. As early as 1829, when the Mexican

playwright José María Mangino adapted *Jicoténcal* for his own dramatic production of *Xicoténcatl*, he pointed out that the author of the novel from Philadelphia appeared to know suspiciously little about the Mexican landscapes described in the text. "The absurdities and deformities that abound in said text are insufferable," he charged, but "much more so the lack of basic knowledge of the country."³¹ And in the twentieth century, two of the most rigorous arguments about the novel's authorship conclude that the writer was in fact Cuban. In 1960 Luis Leal documented a community of expatriate and exiled hispanophone writers in Philadelphia in the early 1820s, suggesting that the author of *Jicoténcal* was Félix Varela (1788–1853), a Cuban priest and political exile who fled to the United States after the Spanish colonial government had pronounced his death sentence in the colony.³² Yet in 1997 Alejandro González Acosta drew on Leal's research, along with that of numerous other Latin Americanists, to propose instead that the writer behind the "enigma" of *Jicoténcal* was actually the celebrated Cuban poet José María Heredia, also a political exile to the United States in the early 1820s. Outlining Heredia's adolescent visit to Mexico and his literary interest in the country from that time onward, González Acosta notes that in 1823, just before his hasty departure from Cuba, the poet was known to have been working on a tragedy that centered on the Tlaxcalan general.³³ Though this particular work has never resurfaced, Heredia did treat most of the main figures that appear in *Jicoténcal* in his poems, and González Acosta demonstrates a number of affinities between passages from the anonymous novel and the poetry. Through its anonymity, its language, its genre, and its political resonance, *Jicoténcal* has thus opened itself up to a range of interpretive nationalist frameworks: alternatively a postcolonial product of Mexican independence or a traveling text of the colonial hispanophone Caribbean, it is attributed to authors claimed simultaneously in both Mexican and Cuban literary histories.³⁴

Leal's research alone documents a dizzying array of writers from not only Mexico and Cuba but Ecuador, Argentina, and various other parts of Latin America who resided in or near Philadelphia in the early nineteenth century and could conceivably have authored the novel; though he raises such possibilities in order to argue against them, the very thoroughness of his investigation seems only to underscore a proliferation of potential authorial identities.³⁵ And in confronting even the two most convincing biographical scenarios provided by Leal and González Acosta, we find that each hypothesis exposes in the other the discontinuities of *Jicoténcal*'s potential authorial identity: how, on one hand, could Varela as a priest renowned for his devotion have undertaken the critique of Catholic evangelism registered

in the novel; and how, on the other, could Heredia as a writer known for his precise and polished style have produced a work that many have judged to be of lesser quality?³⁶ Whatever its ostensible merit as literature, it is clear that *Jicoténcal* turns along multiple cultural and interpretive axes, functioning simultaneously as a commentary upon newly independent Mexico that locates a national scapegoat in the figure of Doña Marina; as an allegory of Cuba's perilous situation of colonial dependence, in which the beleaguered Tlaxcalan nation stands in for the vulnerable nineteenth-century Cuban island; and as a drama of contemporaneous Mexican cultural identity, in which the heroic figure of Xicoténcatl the Younger enacts the Spanish-indigenous dichotomy of national self-conception.³⁷

This last interpretation has been proposed by Guillermo Castillo-Feliú in his 1999 English-language translation of *Jicoténcal*, an edition that also implicitly constructs a nationally based, and often contradictory, genealogy for the anonymous novel. While the Translator's Note purports to offer not an interpretation but a "scrupulous transmutation" of the original text to avoid any "disservice to the original intent of the author," the edition nevertheless alters the title to *Xicoténcatl* without explanation of any kind, choosing a more recognizably Mexican orthography over the author's original spelling, and tacitly privileging the novel's place within the Mexican literary tradition – rather than the Cuban or Cuban-American tradition with which Varela would be associated.³⁸ Though Castillo-Feliú concedes Varela as the most likely author, citing Leal as the best source of research into the subject, this unexplained change effectively presents the work as a Mexican story, as does his added subtitle: "An anonymous historical novel about the events leading up to the conquest of the Aztec empire."

Of the multiple genealogical stories and national narratives that the potential authors of *Jicoténcal* make available, the most obviously crucial for the purposes of this chapter involves the recent addition of the United States to the list of the novel's national affiliations. Notwithstanding its status as both a Mexican and a Cuban novel, *Jicoténcal* offered an important contribution to a heated intellectual climate to the north, where it was produced within the context of a particular public sphere: a closely interactive community of hispanophone exiles and expatriates from throughout the Americas, conspirators and revolutionaries for Latin American independence, gathered in the historically revolutionary North American cities of Philadelphia and New York. Producing not only poetry and fiction but translations, literary critiques, numerous periodicals, and a broad range of collaborative writings, this intellectual community undertook a series of

political, creative, and scholarly activities that caught the attention even of mainstream Anglo-American periodicals of the 1820s.³⁹

This vibrant hispanophone literary scene has reemerged to new scholarly attention under the rubric of Arte Público's *Recovering the US Hispanic Literary Heritage* series, which republished the original Spanish-language text of *Jicoténcal* in 1995. The wider project of the series is to address what project director Nicolás Kanellos describes as a significant lacuna within scholarship on US literature – the subject of its “Hispanic contribution” – deriving largely from a pervasive belief in mainstream US literary studies that Latino literary production is only a recent phenomenon.⁴⁰ Attending to this heritage from its beginnings during the colonial period, and exploring “its ethnic and national diversity, its regional variations, the scope of its genres, its canonic texts and its untapped potentials,” the series contests the exclusionary opposition between US and Latin American literatures.⁴¹ Yet the editorial and scholarly choice to recruit *Jicoténcal* into the US hispanic literary heritage depends largely on Leal's 1960 hypothesis that the anonymous author of the historical novel published in Philadelphia was neither Heredia, who visited the United States for less than two years before relocating permanently to Mexico, nor a Mexican writer of unknown relation to the city or country in which the novel was published, nor a writer living in any other part of the Americas, but instead the Cuban emigrant Varela, who wrote, worked, and lived out the last thirty years of his life in different parts of the United States. As co-editor with Rodolfo Cortina of the Arte Público edition of *Jicoténcal*, Leal gives an updated review of the scholarship and of his earlier argument for Varela as the anonymous author in a lengthy Introduction, which supplements his initial article with an added emphasis on the novel's new status as “one of the first . . . in the literary study of the Hispanic novel of the United States.”⁴² Within this particular genealogy, *Jicoténcal* becomes part of an “undiscovered and unclassified continent,” located in a “space between two worlds, that of the US in which the literary production of Hispanics is ignored, and that of Hispanic America, which only sees the writers in the North and never as of the North, fitting into that which has until recently been the ignored castoff [‘el saco roto’] of Hispanic literary production: the Hispanic literature of the US.”⁴³

If the Arte Público *Jicoténcal* participates in the revaluation of a marginalized literary heritage, it remains nevertheless uneasily tied to a literary historiographical discourse that privileges one of the novel's potential national affiliations over its others. “Beyond the classification of the novel *Jicoténcal* as the work of a Cuban, and therefore, belonging to the Cuban literary body, or as that of a Spaniard of the island of Cuba, all of which remains

conceded,” Leal and Cortina argue, “it is the work of an author who lived and published a great part of his work in the United States.”⁴⁴ While granting that their reclamation of the novel for the US hispanic literary heritage is “not exclusive of other possible classifications,” the Arte Público editors nonetheless make the scholarly and marketing choice to issue the novel, unknown to most contemporary readers, under Varela’s name on their title page – a choice that, despite Leal’s generously argued theory of authorship, will undoubtedly have particular effects upon future readers and scholars.⁴⁵ The title page alone occludes a part of the text’s story as surely as it does the author’s original intention to remain of ambiguous national and personal identity for any number of reasons. This appears to have resulted in the unqualified attribution of the novel to Varela in the few instances of US literary studies where it appears, and in the reduction, in at least one instance, of the novel’s complex cultural heritage simply to the work of a “New York priest,” with no trace left of its potential Cuban or Mexican affiliation.⁴⁶ In other words, while the release of *Jicoténcal* under Varela’s name rather than in its original anonymous form proves hardly necessary to confirm what the editors convincingly assert is its place in the US hispanic literary heritage, it also has the effect of eliding the novel’s other plausible genealogies, and thus the interrelations among a number of its historical and cultural contexts, from colonial Cuban politics to Mexican literary history to an expatriate hispanophone literary community in Philadelphia in the early nineteenth century.

NATION AND COLLABORATION: VARELA, HEREDIA,
ROCAFUERTE, AND THE ITINERANCIES OF AUTHORSHIP

Along with an often unexamined propensity to affiliate *Jicoténcal* with a single national tradition comes a desire on the part of its modern critics to assign its writing to a single identifiable author. Yet given the character of hispanophone literary subcultures in the nineteenth-century United States, there is good reason to suspect that the novel’s anonymity disguises not the name of one author but the members of a transnational collectivity that ensured its progress from exilic manuscript to printed book. Anonymity and collaboration often went hand in hand during this period, when controversial writings by dissidents and exiles depended on secretive transmission as well as coterie circulation and revision for their publication.⁴⁷ Considering the multiple authorial narratives that have been proposed for this novel, none of them able to account entirely for all the relevant evidence, the possibility of a collaborative genealogy for *Jicoténcal* seems plausible. The

writing careers of Heredia and Varela, as González Acosta and Leal along with Cortina have documented them, offer prime examples of the sorts of exigencies that resulted in the kind of coalitional authorship that could have produced *Jicoténcal*. Both undertook precipitous flights from colonial Cuba and, as we have seen, relocated in the United States as political exiles. Both worked on what has been called the first Cuban revolutionary periodical, as well as the first Cuban newspaper published in the United States, *El Habanero*, a compendium of literary contributions as well as political tracts on Cuban independence that was published from Philadelphia (and later New York) between 1824 and 1826, by the William Stavely Publishing House, which also released *Jicoténcal*.⁴⁸ Condemned and prohibited by the Spanish colonial government in Cuba, which sought nothing less than the death of its editor, the *Habanero* left both Varela and Heredia in perilous political situations relative to the land of their birth.⁴⁹

Yet because Heredia, unlike Varela, had no papers of safe conduct within the United States, his literary career necessarily took a different course than it might otherwise have done.⁵⁰ Before his flight from Cuba, the poet had been working on a tragedy titled *Xicoténcatl, o Los tlascaltecas* that never appeared later among his works. Though it is unclear whether he might have included the unfinished manuscript with the poems he brought to the United States, an 1827 letter from Heredia to the Cuban writer and reformer Domingo del Monte reveals that Heredia had in fact some years earlier consulted him about a literary work he wanted to publish on the subject of Mexico, the country in which he later found permanent asylum from Cuba.⁵¹ Heredia resettled in Mexico City in 1825, after a literary friend wrote a letter of recommendation on his behalf to President Guadalupe Victoria.⁵² Meanwhile, Varela continued to write and publish in Philadelphia and then New York. Now the two writers worked from within two distinct cultural and political spheres, obliged to communicate across national borders and sometimes even through the efforts of mutual literary colleagues. It was apparently to Varela that Heredia entrusted his completed writings for future publication and sale before leaving for Mexico in 1825, for a letter from 1828 instructs Varela to try to “sell altogether at any price” the last copies of Heredia’s poetry in his possession.⁵³ Indeed, as a writer, Heredia must have found his asylum in Mexico particularly difficult: the United States was the country in which he had published and sold his writing, and it had always been his habit to consult literary colleagues in revising his works.⁵⁴ He would likely have sought the aid of such a friend in completing the unfinished manuscript on *Xicoténcatl* and the Tlaxcalans that he was known to have been working on in Cuba. Begun

in Heredia's hand, this manuscript would need completion by another author, one whose different writing style might well account for the blunt, unpolished prose that strangely shapes substantial portions of the novel, and that scholars have hesitated to associate with Heredia's elevated tones.

But within this hypothetical narrative of the novel's genealogy, it is hard to imagine that Heredia would have turned to Varela for help on this particular project. The vehement critique of Christianity and the Catholic Church's complicity in the brutality of the Conquest that are registered in *Jicoténcal* would certainly have made Heredia hesitate in asking a literary compatriot who was also a Catholic priest for help in authoring the novel into existence, in the actual completion of the manuscript. Nowhere do Varela's writings indicate that he questioned the Christian faith, in the manner of the novel's narrator, or even that he was open to criticism of the Church in any particular historical moment.⁵⁵ At the same time, living in asylum in Mexico, Heredia had an urgent need for anonymity in the publication of a novel that sustained what might easily be interpreted as a polemic against the contemporary Mexican government. Even before he had left Cuba for the United States, Heredia had worried about the consequences of attaching his name to a work criticizing the "Mexicans," lest, as he put it to his friend del Monte, he "bring upon [himself], by that despotic government, proscription from a country where [he] might have to seek asylum."⁵⁶ Any publication of his novel thus *required* anonymity, an exigency that would certainly have further discouraged Heredia from seeking out Varela's hand in completing the text. Varela's opinions of anonymous writings were no secret: he considered them evidence of cowardice.⁵⁷ Living in exile, Varela could and did attach his own name to writings that were critical of Cuba; with safe papers of asylum in the United States, moreover, he had little to fear from Mexico.⁵⁸ To whom, then, would Heredia have turned for help in completing a manuscript with which he could not safely be associated in Mexico? Perhaps, I want to suggest, to a different literary friend: Vicente Rocafuerte, a man Heredia had known in Cuba; an iconoclast who, unlike Varela, considered it a mark of enlightenment to be called a blasphemer as a result of his criticism of the Catholic Church as an institution; a writer who had no problems with authorial anonymity in a politically fraught hemisphere, and who had in fact already published anonymous polemical writings in the United States and Cuba.⁵⁹

Unlike either Varela or Heredia, Rocafuerte descended from a rich family in Central America, and was born in a part of what later became Ecuador, in a coastal town whose economy was heavily tied to slavery.⁶⁰ Despite his advantaged birth into colonial wealth, however, Rocafuerte's ancestry

was unclear, his genealogy murky. Legally and socially defined as white, he was, according to some accounts, a mulatto⁶¹ – born into an ambiguous racial inheritance that might have contributed to *Jicoténcal*'s deep sense of the Americas as ethnically and culturally mixed, and its groundbreaking indigenism in a cultural moment in which hispanophone Creole writing tended anxiously to favor discrete racial hierarchies and untainted Spanish bloodlines.⁶² Born in 1783, Rocafuerte was in his youth sent by his family for his education to Europe, where his acquaintance with Bolívar, in 1803, would profoundly shape his future sensibility as a writer and diplomat.

Even in his subsequent service to colonial governments, or governments with which he disagreed, Rocafuerte retained in his political work as well as in his anonymous writings a revolutionary orientation that characterized both his youth and much of *Jicoténcal*.⁶³ Residing in and outside Cuba between 1820 and 1822, Rocafuerte met and came to know Heredia; they were both in Philadelphia over the next few years, though never at the same time, steeped in the conspiratorial atmosphere of the hispanophone literary and revolutionary community. By 1825 Heredia had relocated to Mexico, where, as his letters to friends and family suggest, he was in financial trouble.⁶⁴ The more affluent Rocafuerte, meanwhile, had discretionary money that had allowed him in the past to sponsor the publications of Latin American writers with political problems similar to Heredia's: as his biographer Kent B. Mecum put it, he believed that "his mission in life was to spread the important ideas to his American compatriots."⁶⁵

The evidence pointing to Rocafuerte's hand in completing Heredia's unfinished manuscript on Xicoténcatl and the Mexican Conquest is vast, ranging from the Masonic rhetoric interspersed throughout *Jicoténcal*, which would associate it with Rocafuerte's affiliation as a Mason (while Varela notably deplored secret societies), to the novel's trademark repeating phrases "interín" and "en el interín" ("in the interim"), uncommon usages that Rocafuerte, unlike either Varela or Heredia, used pervasively throughout his attributed writings.⁶⁶ At the same time, given the thematic frame of the novel, it is significant that both Rocafuerte and Heredia showed long-standing interests in both Mexico and Mexican indigenism in their other writings, while Varela did not.⁶⁷ Rocafuerte, in particular, was passionate on the subject of Mexican politics: he vehemently opposed Agustín de Iturbide's self-declared emperorship, which he saw as a form of tyranny that could ruin Mexico's possibilities for sustaining democratic and republican ideals.⁶⁸ Moreover, unlike the poetic Heredia, Rocafuerte favored the use of propaganda and harbored no aesthetic qualms about deploying literature as its vehicle – a predilection that similarly inspires the polemical narrator

who presides over much of *Jicoténcal*.⁶⁹ Yet by 1822 Rocafuerte, unlike Varela, had reasons to fear incurring the wrath of the Mexican government for any critique, veiled or otherwise, registered against its workings: some of his family had taken up residence in Mexico, and he was now employed in the service of the Mexican government as its diplomatic representative in London. For precisely this reason, he chose anonymous publication for *Bosquejo ligerísimo de la revolución de Méjico: desde el grito de Iguala hasta la proclamación imperial de Iturbide*, his diatribe against what he saw as the imperial corruption of the Iturbide government, which appeared anonymously in the United States in 1822. He explained in no uncertain terms in the prologue to *Bosquejo* that he needed to write anonymously because of loved ones in Mexico, “upon whom my name might bring harm” (“a quienes podría perjudicar mi nombre”).⁷⁰ Heredia, soon to be living in Mexico himself, shared this need for anonymity, and chose not to put his name to his poem “A los habitantes de Anáhuac,” which appeared at the end of *Bosquejo* – a work that was thus also in a sense the first collaborative effort undertaken between the two men. By the time of *Jicoténcal*’s publication, Rocafuerte was thus accustomed to collaborative and anonymous as well as pseudonymous publication, sometimes even playfully creating anagrams of his name, as if he almost enjoyed the role of the authorial trickster given his tenuous political and national status.⁷¹

Rocafuerte’s shifting national identities and affiliations, shaped by the circumstances of his birth and revolutionary youth as well as his later diplomatic positions, instilled in him a sense of pan-Americanism that allowed him to develop enduring cultural and patriotic ties to multiple parts of the hemisphere, serving the foreign interests of widely differing governments even when he publicly (if often anonymously) disagreed with their internal orientations and domestic policies. The Cuban secret society Soles y Rayos de Bolívar (Suns and Rays of Bolívar) selected him as a representative to Spain to determine if the Spanish government would recognize the Republic of “la Gran Colombia”;⁷² later he served for the postcolonial Mexican government as an ambassador to England. A diplomatic voice connecting the Old and New Worlds while pursuing political autonomy and security for the latter, Rocafuerte considered himself beyond any discrete nationality to be a citizen of the Americas – an “American” rather than an Ecuadorian, a Cuban, or a Mexican.⁷³ Though he did not represent any New World government at the 1826 Congress of Panama, he was an important advocate for one of the most significant issues on its inter-American agenda: a potential cooperative American military endeavor, to be undertaken largely by Mexico and Venezuela, to liberate Cuba from Spain.⁷⁴

All these factors help to explain why Heredia and Rocafuerte, as two exiled Cuban writers, would have chosen to cast the Mexican historical figure of Xicoténcatl as the hero of their novel. As Carlos J. Alonso notes, the early nineteenth-century Cuban tradition of indigenist writings often focused on the period of the Spanish Conquest (for example, Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda's *Guatimozín*, also set in Mexico) and produced a genre particularly suitable, with its cruel conquistadors and defenseless Indians, for projecting contemporary political circumstances onto the past in order to produce indirect commentary.⁷⁵ In the case of *Jicoténcal*, this commentary proves not only indirect but multidirectional, largely because it is made through the specific Mexican history of the Tlaxcalans, who allied themselves with the Spanish conquistadors in the sixteenth century, and even opposed Mexican independence in the early nineteenth century, thereby earning their problematic status in future Mexican nationalist ideology. Xicoténcatl proved ideal as a hero for a novelized political commentary precisely because he was a dissenting figure among the Tlaxcalans, who were understood (and indeed presented themselves) as collaborators with the Spaniards: not only did he oppose alliance with the Spanish, but he favored coalition with the Aztecs against the European invaders.⁷⁶ Xicoténcatl thus provided an apt historical figure through whom the novel might direct its political criticism toward a range of sites across the Americas: toward Cuba and the Spanish conquerors and future colonial authorities whom the book openly reviles, toward an early independent Mexican government rife with factions, and toward an already expanding northeastern United States with an eye soon cast upon both of these southern neighbors.

Indeed, the history of Tlaxcala offers the novel's object lesson about its own historical moment: the tragedy of *Jicoténcal* is precisely the failure of its various indigenous characters to retain their sense of themselves as "Americans," to use Rocafuerte's as well as the novel's word, over and above their identities as Tlaxcalans, Zocotlans, and Mexicans, in order to cast off foreign imperial threat. The novel's noble Tlaxcalans may worship liberty at the altar of just law, but the narrative casts their ultimate destruction by the Spaniards as the result of a failure to forge inter-American coalitions. It is not hard to see the novel's historical moment refracted through the Conquest here: if the Tlaxcalans were not finally liberated from the Spanish *conquistadores*, neither was Cuba as a result of the Congress of Panama. By the time Cuba finally achieved its independence from Spain in 1898, another imperial threat was securely in place – one that had been developing even in 1826. When *Jicoténcal* appeared that year in Philadelphia, its author(s) clearly intended to reach a specific community of Latin American exiles

in the northeast, seeking in the same moment as the Congress of Panama to construct an inter-American coalition of readers against residual and emergent modes of imperialism in the Americas.

Yet even within the framework of my own hypothetical genealogy of the novel, it seems not unlikely that it was indeed Varela to whom Rocafuerte entrusted the manuscript begun by Heredia and completed by himself for deliverance to the William Staveland Publishing House in Philadelphia. Heredia and Rocafuerte were both outside the United States in the year *Jicoténcal* appeared; and Varela, despite his devotion to the Catholic Church and his opposition to anonymous publications, would surely have supported the dissemination of a novel that thematically endorsed the liberation of the Americas from Spain. Rocafuerte and Heredia could thus call upon the revolutionary Cuban-US journalist and priest to give their novel public voice while protecting their identities in their new Mexican repatriation. The narrative I have offered here, then, is one of transamerican collaboration: the story of three Latin American writers who sought exile in the United States, one carrying an unfinished literary work on the conquest of Mexico, which he entrusted to a second for its completion, before it was delivered by the third writer to its ultimate place of publication. The resultant literary artifact was thus dependent upon the labors and risks of more than one man, and emerged as a mysterious hybrid of two distinct ideologies and styles, the unlikely duet of a poet and a political essayist who were both transamerican revolutionaries and writers.

JICOTÉNCAL'S HEMISPHERIC ARENA: DEL MONTE'S COOPER, HEREDIA'S COOPER

Even the briefest historiography of *Jicoténcal* thus reveals a repository of interweaving genealogical narratives that collectively detail a transamerican arena of political and literary transmission. *Jicoténcal* first went on sale, according to the announcement on its first page, at the home of "Lanuza y Mendiá, No. 3 Varick Street," on the same short stretch of Seventh Avenue in Manhattan where, as it happens, Bryant lived for a period during the same decade with the Salazars, a Spanish family with business ties in Cuba.⁷⁷ It was during this period, as we shall see in Chapter Four, that Bryant was himself beginning to translate and publish hispanophone American literary production, including Heredia's poetry, immersing himself in a lifelong fascination with Cuba and Mexico. In fact, Bryant's interpretation of the novel figures importantly in several of the Latin Americanist arguments about *Jicoténcal's* authorship. Leal explores the various possible meanings of

Bryant's reference to the unnamed author's "countrymen," while González Acosta draws upon Bryant's book collection, which included an impressive array of Spanish-language texts, to argue that because Heredia's first volume of poetry and the anonymous *Jicoténcal* appeared next to each other, it is reasonable to assume that the two works came into Bryant's possession at the same time and thus were written by the same author.⁷⁸

If the Anglo-American "fireside" poet finds a significant place in the transamerican genealogies that document and account for *Jicoténcal*, so, too, does the Leatherstocking author whose *The Last of the Mohicans* appeared in the same year as the anonymous historical novel from Philadelphia. As is well known, Cooper's novels had a long afterlife in a series of Latin American responses, from Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's *Facundo: civilización y barbarie* (1845) through Rómulo Gallegos's *Doña Bárbara* (1929).⁷⁹ Yet long before these rewritings, *The Last of the Mohicans* and *Jicoténcal* adumbrated a competing pair of historico-novelistic discourses within a shared genealogy, one that readers traced in the case of both works to Scott.⁸⁰ Both Cooper's novel and *Jicoténcal* drew upon the genre of the historical novel as Scott had established it in the early years of the century, each also seeking through the use of indigenous materials to establish a new model, an American form distinct from its European literary forebear. *Jicoténcal* bears an obviously agonistic relation to this forebear, producing a strong misreading of its predecessor both in its recruitment of historical rather than fictional characters against the backdrop of the particular moment it documents and in its privileging of morality and didacticism over exotic adventure. But unlike the anonymous author whose novel resisted its literary model in a number of obvious ways, Cooper's identity and his relation to Scott were both unmistakably clear, so much so that he was in his own time known and praised throughout Europe as the Walter Scott of the United States, a comparison that he eventually resented.

Perhaps because of his quick acclaim on the European scene, Cooper's writings also became traveling texts in a network of Cuban-US intellectual exchange. A particularly intriguing example of this exchange can be found in a series of letters between Alexander Hill Everett, the US writer, diplomat, and editor of the prestigious *North American Review*, and Domingo del Monte, the Cuban intellectual whose prolific literary coterie ushered in the "Golden Age" of nineteenth-century Cuban literary history (both of whom are discussed at length in Chapter Four). A letter from May 1840, for example, documents del Monte's receipt of Everett's gift of "Cooper's latest novel" – "which I read with much pleasure, and which must be one of the best productions of this genius, which never shows itself

with more bravery than when he ensconces himself in the primitive woods of your America, and paints for us the customs and characters of its first inhabitants.”⁸¹ Del Monte’s reaction to Cooper’s depiction of the “primitive woods” and their “first inhabitants” – esteem for the courage revealed in the author – reflects his own assumptions as an influential man of letters in colonial, slaveholding Cuba. Known in Latin American literary history for mentoring a circle of reformist writers, del Monte sought to improve the evils of Cuban slavery specifically through courageous acts of literary production, such as the procurement and proliferation of the only extant Cuban slave narrative, the autobiography of Juan Francisco Manzano, a poet and Creole mulatto whose freedom he eventually secured. Yet del Monte did not advocate either immediate independence or abolition, both of which he believed might invite the fate of colonial Saint-Domingue and result in an island ruled, as he saw things, by the base instincts of its African inhabitants; he might avow unshakable moral virtues in an individual slave such as Manzano, but he aspired simultaneously “to cleanse Cuba of the African race.”⁸² In this sense, del Monte’s ideas were perhaps not so different from those of Cooper, who also imputed both nobility and savagery to the racial figures upon whose demise he insisted. Del Monte himself seems to have understood the two as intertwined in a circuit of literary transmission, for in the same breath in which he thanks Everett for Cooper’s novel, he expresses his gratitude as well for “the good opinion you have formed of my own poor writings, and the honor that you dispense in wanting to copy [them] for publication in the United States.”⁸³

Yet if del Monte valorized Cooper, Heredia could not. The Cuban poet was the first hispanophone translator in the Americas of Scott’s *Waverly*, but he condemned as frivolous Cooper’s model of the historical novel.⁸⁴ For Heredia, the favorite literary son from the United States presented certain problems, chief among which was what he saw as Cooper’s dangerously overweening pride of country – “an exaggerated spirit of nationalism,” as he put it in an 1832 issue of the Mexican journal *Miscelánea: periodico crítico y literario*, corresponding to an “inflexibility of character.”⁸⁵ Quoting a disparaging British publication with evident approval, Heredia observed that Cooper held less pride in his own literary abilities than in his birthplace, demanding to be known first as a citizen of the United States rather than as the author of *The Pilot* or *The Prairie*. Though Heredia does not address the content of the works themselves, the brief essay invites readers to reconsider these and Cooper’s other novels in the context of his critique of the author as a personality – and to read them against the grain of the poet’s own literary geography, inscribed within poems that speak to a lost Cuban homeland,

to a liberated United States that was the legacy of Washington, to the sublime border marked by Niagara Falls, to ancient sites within indigenous Mexico, to the fraught terrain of Venezuela on which Simón Bolívar died for an independent Latin America.⁸⁶

In other words, Heredia's literary production, as well as the lived experience of an international career spent in an often unstable state of exile, afforded the poet a particularly keen understanding of the perils of such an "exaggerated spirit of nationalism" that he perceived in Cooper. Both del Monte's Cooper and Heredia's Cooper offer broadly internationalist perspectives on the career and oeuvre of the first professional novelist of the United States, revealing in very different ways his affiliations with a larger body of hemispherically American literature. Yet these affiliations can also be seen as part of a broader transamericanism pressuring the northern geographical margins of Cooper's most famous novel. While this text's manifest inscriptions of the American Indian have rightly been seen as its most enduring contribution to the racialized landscape of US literary history, its precisely timed revelation of Cora's Caribbean origins marks but one trace of the novel's fugitive narrative of West Indian crossings: a narrative centered, like so many subsequent Anglo-American fictions, around the permeability of US-Caribbean borders. The first chapter of the novel registers through David Gamut's seemingly innocuous prattle about horses the dark presence of trading ships "collecting their droves, like the gathering to the ark, being outward bound to the island of Jamaica, for the purpose of barter and traffic in four-footed animals" (22). The scene is clearly meant to evoke a traffic in two-footed cargo as well, in the human chattel who comprise precisely "that unfortunate class" from whom Cora, readers later learn, is maternally descended (22, 180). But even before Munro recounts the story of his older daughter's origins, the novel references through his dismissive valuation of Montcalm's nobility the "pretty degree of knighthood . . . which can be bought with sugar-hogshead" – the purchase of European aristocratic status with wealth derived from Caribbean slavery (178). This observation of the triangulated relation between European wealth, African slaves, and New World commodities immediately precedes Munro's confession of a West Indian inheritance passed through Cora, a confession of economic as well as biological ties that binds the narrative irrevocably to the Caribbean even as it promulgates an irresolvable Caribbean difference that ensures the necessity of Cora's eventual death within Cooper's imagined national past.

Perhaps more important for the purposes of this chapter, however, Cooper's novel reminds us that even the most canonical sites in the early US literary landscape derived economic and imaginative sustenance from

a Caribbean they relied upon and exoticized yet consistently abjected. In 1647 John Winthrop, founding governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and author of the foundational “City Upon a Hill,” noted that “[it] pleased the Lord to open to us a trade with Barbados and other islands in the West Indies”; in Salem, 1692, it was two West Indian slaves, John and Tituba, who catalyzed the famous trials that have always haunted the American literary psyche, inciting the frenzy with their alleged “witch cake” and Caribbean incantations.⁸⁷ And King Philip’s War – whose Anglo-Indian alliances and rivalries provided both the ideological rationale and the historical background for Cooper’s valorized Mohegans and vilified Iroquois – saw shiploads of New England Indians carried off to be sold into slavery in the West Indies.⁸⁸ According to the historical and narrative logic of the novel, in other words, perhaps Cooper’s Indians and his Caribbean-born Cora shared a transamerican genealogy after all.

In this sense, Cora might best be understood as symptomatic of a long history of US-West Indian relations, an embodiment of the novel’s anxious diagnosis of Caribbean difference – a projection of disjuncture that also characterizes the complex history of legal prohibitions against interracial sex and marriage in the future United States, which directly opposed the veritable sanctioning of such interracial relationships in the British West Indies. Cora’s fluctuating racial identity within the novel – her ambiguous status as both an Anglo heroine and a dark lady; a “Yengee,” in her own words, and a victim of the racial “curse of [her] ancestors” (344, 343) – marks the profound cultural difference between the fluidity of West Indian racial constructions, according to which a family might pass from “black” to “white” in the space of three generations, and a proto-US racial ideology that compared “dark blood” to an original sin staining a person and her heirs forever.⁸⁹ Cora’s death in the novel thus consolidates the racial and national boundaries between the Caribbean and the future United States, even as their intertwining histories also give a kind of pathological shape to the narrative’s most fraught scene. A half-century before Cooper, but not so long after Cora’s death in the temporal world of the novel, the Anglo-American colonial poet John Singleton toured Jamaica and the wider Caribbean before offering some advice to the “sons of Caribbean lands” in his *General Description of the West-Indian Islands*. Warning them to “[s]hun the false lure of Ethiopic charms . . . [though] Perhaps the dark complexion of the slave/The eye enjoys, and in an aspect foul/Wanton delights,” his verses reveal with disturbing clarity the simultaneous anxiety and desire that underwrites the early Anglo-American vision of the Caribbean: a vision that will later give rich, imaginative birth to Cora in the West Indies yet

condemn her to die after her arrival in the geographic arena of the future United States.⁹⁰

JICOTÉNCAL, *THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS*, AND THE
REPRODUCTION OF HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING

The transamerican trajectory of Cooper's novel has a crucial point of origin as well in the anonymous *Jicoténcal*, with which *The Last of the Mohicans* converses and competes across a shared genealogy of historical understanding that both novels inherit, manipulate, and reproduce in altered forms. "[A]mong the mud and trash that sully the documents of history," contends the narrator of *Jicoténcal* in the sixth and final book of the novel, "[t]he philosopher's shrewd eye knows how to distinguish . . . some sparks of truth that neither fanaticism nor servile adulation have been able to extinguish" (131). Pausing momentarily in his tale of Tlaxcalan submission to the Spaniards, the narrator offers here what is only one of the novel's many commentaries on the problems of official histories, the products of "fanaticism" and "servile adulation" sanctioned by church and government alike. *Jicoténcal*'s nearly disruptive preoccupation with the nature of nationalist historical writings stems from the novel's self-consciousness of genre, and in particular from its extensive creative reliance on Spanish chronicles of the Conquest, primarily those of Antonio de Solís (*Historia de la conquista de Méjico*, 1685) and, to a much lesser extent, of Bartolomé de las Casas. Simultaneously objects of suspicion and of necessity, the chronicles hold a tense and fluctuating relation to the larger narrative of *Jicoténcal*, which proposes to excavate from within them "some sparks of truth," offered to the reader through the "shrewd" exegesis of its philosopher-narrator.

Like *Jicoténcal*, Cooper's novel also registers certain contradictions inherent within historical writings even as it depends upon them. In a particularly revealing aphorism, the narrator of *The Last of the Mohicans* comments ironically that "history, like love, is . . . apt to surround her heroes with an atmosphere of imaginary brightness."⁹¹ What makes this gnomic understatement so devastating is its appearance in the novel just after the dramatization of the so-called Indian "massacre of William Henry," the 1757 British surrender of their northern fort to the French in the French and Indian War. The narrative's distrust of history emanates from nationalist as much as generic bias, in other words, from disapproval of those French histories in which the French commander presiding over the surrender "will be viewed by posterity only as the gallant defender of his country, while

his cruel apathy . . . will be forgotten.” Purporting to “deeply regret . . . this weakness on the part of a sister muse,” the narrator hastens nevertheless to enlist history for the purposes of his own tale – and then to “retire from her sacred precincts, within the proper limits of our own humbler vocation,” the realm of the apparently less virtuous and less refined sister, the muse of literature (204). The generic contrast that Cooper is drawing here clearly refers on another level to Alice and Cora Munro, one sister held “sacred” above all else, while the other of “humbler” origins exhibits nevertheless by the novel’s end the somehow “imaginary brightness” cast by her revered younger half-sibling. Cooper himself seems unable to decide where his loyalties lie, between either the two sisters or the two genres, claiming to have produced in the novel no mere “fiction,” no “romantic and imaginary picture of things which never happened,” even as he acknowledges his “proper limits” within the literary rather than the historical arena (3). In this sense, the novel’s extended generic metaphor suggests, *The Last of the Mohicans* is, after all, perhaps most like Cora: the product of a simultaneously generic and genealogical mixture, unable to escape the inheritance of either of its literary or historical forebears.

Natty Bumpo himself points up the problems of both written histories and historical fictions: “It is one of their customs to write in books what they have done and seen, instead of telling them in their villages, where the lie can be given to the face of a cowardly boaster.” But if Natty sees that “every story has its two sides” – and momentarily entreats Chingachgook to relate North American history “according to the traditions of the red men” – the novel’s own broader relation to history is far less problematized than is *Jicoténcal*’s. Cooper’s 1826 preface assumes the responsibility to explain “a few of the obscurities of the historical allusions,” lest “the more imaginative sex” mistake fact for fiction, before advising its readers of the transparent and proselytizing role of the historian. Noting the death of “the pious, the venerable, and the experienced [Reverend John] Heckewelder,” whose 1819 *Account of the History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations* provided material for the novel’s depiction of Indian cultures, Cooper briefly eulogizes the minister-historian for “labour[ing] long and ardently in . . . behalf” of the Indians, “and not less to vindicate their fame, than to improve their moral condition.” For Cooper, Heckewelder embodies “a fund of information . . . collected in one individual,” whose death has left it permanently “extinguished” – a figure quite unlike the writers of history enlisted in *Jicoténcal*, in other words, whose “mud and trash” may “sully” but cannot finally “extinguish” some truth in the historical documents themselves.

Not surprisingly, then, the particular formal uses to which Cooper's novel and *Jicoténcal* put historical writing differ drastically within the visible frames of the narratives. While Heckewelder holds a revered place in Cooper's preface, neither his words themselves nor the title of his work is ever cited in a novel that depends crucially (and controversially) upon his historical findings. At the same time, Cooper's novel follows its known sources without contesting or questioning them – taking freely, and without documentation, from prior historical writings.⁹² The resulting narrative offers a seamless, seemingly unmediated account of an ostensibly original, historical truth rather than any “romantic and imaginary picture.” *Jicoténcal*, on the other hand, borrows from its sources explicitly and systematically, incorporating entire paragraphs into its narrative, each documented by a note carefully explaining where the interpolation begins and ends in the text. At the same time, the novel's scrupulous citation serves a skeptical manipulation of and commentary upon its historical sources that is hard to imagine in Cooper. To take one striking example, the narrator of *Jicoténcal* relies throughout the novel upon Solís's nationalist and pro-imperialist *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, citing in particular an approving account of Cortés's execution of a Spanish soldier alleged to have plotted against him, and quoting no less than three paragraphs from the chronicle to describe this incident alone. Yet *Jicoténcal*'s narrator produces an antinationalist text against the grain of his own citations by framing his discussion of the execution with reference to a “panegyrist historian,” one whose attempts to “cloak the black infamy” of “our debased ancestors” are to be thwarted by his own historical novel (131, 139). For Solís, the execution of the Spanish soldier occurs efficiently, “as is customarily done in the military style,” and humanely, “after his having been allowed to make his peace with his maker.” Appropriating Solís's words to detail the events themselves, the narrator of *Jicoténcal* proceeds effectively to debunk the Spanish chronicler's intended justification of Cortés's actions with his satiric gloss of the legal expediency depicted in the quoted text and its narrativization of “[a]ccusation, imprisonment, indictment, trial, sentence, execution, everything in the same night!” (140). The novel thus clears a particular literary space for contested interpretations of the same series of events, creating a disjointed relation to its own historical sources that counters the historical orientation of Cooper's narrative and those it sires within US literary history.

As is well known, *The Last of the Mohicans* helped to shape a national literary genealogy of imperialist fictions in which legend and history served as vehicles of a frontier tradition and the rhetoric of Manifest Destiny and

Vanishing Indians that accompanied it.⁹³ This genealogy descended from Cooper through Hawthorne and Melville, spanning the writings of Robert Montgomery Bird in the 1830s through the late-century historian Frederick Jackson Turner, and gave powerful shape to a literary-historical discourse that privileged both the nation's past and its expansive future as the domain of masculinist homosociality. Thus, in the wilderness of Cooper's novel, only the passive fair lady can survive; her autonomous counterpart must not. Even more crucial to Cooper's enactment of this literary removal, of course, is the fact that his fair and dark heroines register racial foils. Alice, icon of Anglo-American ethnic purity, is veritably defined against the different maternal origin of her West Indian half-sister. Thus, for one 1826 reviewer, Cooper's initial descriptions of Cora's difference elicit in his audience a "pleasurable sensation" that is "not a little enhanced" by the later discovery of her remote African ancestry.⁹⁴ Surmising almost lasciviously that "she makes rather free, we think, with the savages" – "probably she felt the title to do so because of her own dark blood" – the review registers an unmistakable sense of titillation surrounding the narrative of Cora's West Indian-African descent and her potential sexual liaisons with the novel's vanishing Indians. Yet such readerly titillation is limited to Cora's role outside the emerging borders of the future nation. Upon reaching the novel's first designation of an "American" character, the review acknowledges that, "like Major Heyward, we are biased." In a striking commentary on the mutually defining ideological relations of racial purity and literary nationalism, the review locates the thrust of its own racial "bias" in the literary rather than the historical world: "while we mean no harm to the colored population of the United States, and even have great esteem for them in certain situations, we cannot help having a particular dislike to richness of Negro blood in a heroine."⁹⁵

At the same time, the reviewer objects to Cooper's representations of indigenous characters on the grounds that they are better suited to the realm of poetry than that of narrative. "Beings that went by this name have acted their parts in the world of fiction almost ever since the discovery that such creatures existed," observes the reviewer; yet "they have not been copies from nature; but mere creations of the poet's brain, the half formed dreams of a disturbed imagination." Objecting especially to what Cooper characterizes as the "instinctive delicacy" of Uncas, the review avers that such sensitivity "in an Indian, is romantic enough" – "but it will not serve for 'narrative.'" "Indians" may indeed be "admirable instruments of romance," but Cooper abuses his authorial privileges over his indigenous characters in a metaphorical slavery that eventually "works them to

death.” In a self-described attempt to “help Cooper’s pen be free from the numerous defects which deform its present productions,” rendering him “worthy of [his] far spread fame [as an] American novelist,” the review thus lays bare the racial contexts of its anxious concerns about the status of national narrative and the future of the US historical novel in particular. Revealing a fear of literary-racial impurity in this above all other genres, the review simultaneously exposes in Cooper’s novel the outline of a historical understanding in which the racial mixture of the wider Americas becomes the repulsive secret that the novel must purge from its national and Anglophone future. The prenatal indigenous past becomes the elusive object of poetry and romance, Indians themselves the disappearing slaves of narrative.

Jicoténcal stages its own argument about historical understanding through an ostensibly similar typological deployment of fair and dark heroines. These female archetypes are figured respectively in Teutila, the virtuous and chaste Zocotlan maiden who, admired by the Spaniards Hernán Cortés and Diego de Ordaz as well as the noble Jicoténcal, lies at the center of a triangle of cross-cultural male alliances and competitive desires; and in the fallen Marina, Teutila’s sexually charged counterpart and Cortés’s Nahuatl mistress, who seeks to regulate the narrative triangle of desires by seducing Ordaz and attempting to ensnare Jicoténcal. Yet Teutila and Marina are indigenous heroines, both enslaved by the imperial power that besieges Mexico. Reversing the theme of Indian captivity structuring Cooper’s novel, *Jicoténcal* argues through the imagined voices of its native female protagonists that historical veracity resides not in the officially sanctioned documents of the victors but in the novelist’s ability to construct the point of view of the conquered, the enslaved, and (in what is perhaps this novel’s greatest source of anxiety) the raped. Though the Tlaxcalan general Jicoténcal, as the book’s title suggests, is the narrative’s apparent protagonist, the speeches of its indigenous heroines structure the most crucial events in the novel. Teutila’s first appearance in Book One is less momentous to the noble Spanish captain Diego de Ordaz for her status as “an extraordinarily beautiful Indian maiden” than for her astute pronouncements about his fear: “[T]hough you say you control lightning and thunder,” she observes upon their first sight of each other, “you also tremble before what the sky discharges. Your fear makes evident your weakness, and it makes you worthy of compassion.” Teutila’s words are immediately accessible to Ordaz, as well as his companion the Fray Bartolomé de Olmedo. Unlike Cooper, who produces a racial hierarchy of languages – in which English, as Natty puts it, is the “genuine tongue of a white-skin” (298) – the hispanophone

narrator of *Jicoténcal* makes no distinction between Teutila's language or manner of speaking and that of the Spaniards.⁹⁶ Her native language is represented transparently to the imperial representative as much as it is to the reader, both of whom are granted access to her speech without the medium of translation. Yet it is also Teutila's assertive speech as much as her beauty that captures the heart of the novel's only admirable Spanish character. Ordaz's appreciation of her artful speech is clearly a measure of his virtuous character, which the novel opposes to that of Hernán Cortés, who is also smitten upon his first meeting with Teutila. While her beauty makes "as much of an impression on [Cortés] as . . . on the honest Diego de Ordaz," Cortés "devour[s Teutila] with his eyes" but fails to attend to the aesthetic and moral qualities of her language.

The structure of the text alone makes clear that Cortés's mistake is a crucial one. For no less than six pages, the novel gives itself over to Teutila's narration. "I am Teutila," she begins (23), proceeding to recount the history of indigenous conflicts and alliances in Mexico, alongside the emergence of her love for Jicoténcal, the leading warrior of the nation at war with her own. Though the omniscient narrator judges at the end of this history that Teutila has "narrated the story of her love with frankness and simplicity," Cortés absorbs only her physical beauty and those political facts that prove advantageous to him (29). Readers, on the other hand, witness an extraordinary narrative sequence made all the more striking for its appearance within an early nineteenth-century US literary context, despite its familiar mode of exoticizing indigenism: an extended, firsthand historical and personal construction of native female experience amid the international politics of war. Describing the events surrounding a devastating battle between the Zocotlans and Tlaxcalans, Teutila tells of the attempted rape of a Zocotlan woman and of specific details of her resistance, the "wounding [of her assailant] in many places on the face with her own hands"; of the death of her mother on the battlefield, "concerned with my father's situation and mine . . . suffer[ing] her pain in silence until she succumbed to the loss of blood"; of "butchery and terror envelop[ing] us everywhere" and her own ensuing enslavement by the Tlaxcalans; of her long resistance to her captor, whom she urges to kill her and "[f]inish satiating your thirst for blood and wring out my soul which cannot stand your horrors"; and of her final realization that his conduct is full of "the same solicitude and respect that I could have expected from my own kind" (23–25). Teutila's narrative offers an autobiographical corrective to the chronicle of imperial conquest upon which the larger novel draws – as well as to the refusal of female agency (much less indigenous female agency) in its anglophone counterpart. In the

figure of Teutila, the novel instantiates an archetypal fair lady who is nevertheless far more like the autonomous but doomed Cora than the passive and redeemed Alice.⁹⁷ Teutila thus ventriloquizes the narrative's countermemory, the alternative history it posits to the chroniclers' imperialist version of the Conquest.⁹⁸

Unlike *Jicoténcal*'s invented character of Teutila, the novel's dark lady, Doña Marina is of course an actual historical figure, one who plays a crucial role in the Spanish chronicles as well as throughout transamerican literary and intellectual history, where she has reappeared in a wide variety of competing personas (to be discussed at greater length in Chapter Five). No first-person account of her experience exists, and in the absence of her own voice, the construction of Marina's identity by writers of diverse subject positions, nationalities, and ideological orientations has been fraught with political consequences since her first appearance in histories of the Mexican Conquest. Mythologized by the Spaniards as a great maternal protector of the European foreigner in the New World, Marina became La Malinche through the syncretic mixture of her Nahuatl birth name, Malinal, and the Spaniards' name for her, Marina, given at her Christian baptism. The Marina who had been idealized by the Spanish chroniclers was later vilified in the popular culture of ensuing centuries and by nationalist Mexican writers, who cast her as a whore and betrayer of her people, as a despised "chingada" or violated one. At the same time, in Mexico's neighbor to the north, the years leading up to the US-Mexican War saw the figure of Marina reappear in a number of Anglo-American historical writings, which drew upon the Spanish chronicles but viewed her through the specifically mid-century lens of US imperial desires.⁹⁹ More recently, however, numerous Chicana writers, from poets and essayists to historians and literary critics, have developed a series of revisionist histories of the Conquest of Mexico which recover Malinal from the genealogy that eventually produced Marina and then La Malinche – reappropriating her from her denigrated position as La Chingada into a celebrated icon of racial and cultural mixture, a transnational and cross-cultural figure of in-betweenness, a symbol of the Borderlands.¹⁰⁰

As the first novel in any language to represent Marina, and to invent her as a literary subject endowed with a significant speaking agency, *Jicoténcal* has received surprisingly little scholarly attention treating the subject of its place in the genealogy that produced the national Eve of Mexico and an enduring New World female archetype. The notable exception is Sandra Messinger Cypess, who locates the novel narrowly within the national Mexican literary tradition, interpreting its depiction of Marina as part

of the postindependence Malinchista tradition shaped by nineteenth-century authors who denigrated La Malinche, reviling her as “a sexual monster . . . the woman who opens herself to the other.”¹⁰¹ But when we reposition *Jicoténcal* within the transamerican genealogy that embraces its initial place of publication and the northeastern US hispanophone literary cultures among which it first appeared, a very different picture of the novel’s Marina begins to emerge. In fact, *Jicoténcal*’s Marina challenges not only the chronicles’ fixed version of their beloved protector as the historical fantasy of the conquerors but in a sense her future incarnations as well. During her final meeting with Cortés, Marina purports to be incapable of ingratitude toward the father of her child, despite “the evils [he has] caused to befall [her],” and she tells him that “time will serve to free you from the illusion that Marina is someone very different from the one whom you have known” (124). It is true, as Cypess argues, that Marina has biblical associations with both the tempted and the tempter; she is both an Eve, who succumbs to the evils embodied in Cortés, and the “astute serpent,” as the narrator repeatedly characterizes her, that lures *Jicoténcal* and Ordaz away from virtue. Even the first line of the novel views the Conquest through the paradigm of a preordained destruction of the romanticized paradise of precontact, indigenous America – “the fall” having been “written in the fateful book of destiny” (7) (“Estaba escrito en el libro fatal del destino la caída . . .” [3]). In this sense, *Jicoténcal* reveals another point of convergence with its anglophone counterpart in *The Last of the Mohicans*, which also stages a drama intertwining sexuality and destiny within a garden-like Eden where Alice and Cora are “tender blossoms,” as Natty puts it, to be saved “from the fangs of the worst of serpents” (54). Considered alongside one another as contemporaneous, transamerican accounts of a New World Eden, the novels’ distinctive tropes of the Fall reveal divergent narratives of reproductive anxiety and projection enabling their respective historical projects.

In Cooper’s text the reproductive narrative crystallizes around the image of an English mother and babe slaughtered by an Indian during the “massacre of William Henry.” Observing her infant dashed against a rock just before her own death, the mother gazes at the resulting “unseemly object, which had so lately nestled in her bosom.” The child’s corpse is disfigured as a grotesque of the offspring she has nurtured, and of her own former role as bearer of British purity in the racially mixed Eden of the New World (198). The image refracts Magua’s angry warning after Cora has rejected his proposal to leave her family and “live in his wigwam forever”: “Her bosom cannot nurse the children of a Huron; she will see it spit upon by Indians!”

(123). The metonymic relation of the nursing bosom to the racial destiny of the future nation reveals the novel's tacit concern with the unstable role of the female reproductive body in its projected vision of an emergent United States. As the tale begins to lay the groundwork for its inevitable closure, Natty performs the literal substitution of a healthy English body for that of a diseased Indian woman, concealing Alice in the blankets of the dying squaw and smuggling her from the Huron camp where she has been imprisoned.

Cora herself enacts a variation of this substitution in the novel's final pages, begging the venerable Tamenund to liberate Alice in exchange for herself, for whom she "ask[s] nothing" – accepting that, like Tamenund and the Indians, "the curse of my ancestors has fallen heavily on their child" (344). And through Cora's death, the novel completes its project of curtailing the reproductive possibilities it has located all along in the dark sister whom Alice repeatedly calls "mother," so much is "her rich blood . . . ready to burst its bounds" (24). In a story that foregrounds the lack of procreativity of its other nonwhite characters – Magua's wife has died and he has no children; Chingachgook buries his only son; and Natty, protesting far too much that he is a man "without a cross," has "no kin, and . . . no people" (394) – only the unambiguously Anglo-American Heyward can dispatch with Alice from the interracial Eden of the wilderness "far into the settlements of the 'pale-faces,'" where they presumably reproduce their whiteness on the eastern seaboard of the future United States (392).

In *Jicoténcal*, however, the most significant reproductive narrative emerges around the Edenic figure of Marina, whose sudden status as a "poisonous serpent" in the eyes of the eponymous hero coincides precisely with the novel's revelation of her pregnancy, the alleged "fruit of her affair" with Cortés (64). Yet the novel clearly introduces a certain amount of doubt about the true source of this pregnancy, representing Marina's servitude as Cortés's mistress alongside a sexual encounter with Ordaz. Ordaz himself realizes "a possibility that he might be the father . . . of a child fated to belong to another father" and worries about "the upbringing that faced that unhappy child," though he also experiences "the pleasure of having given life." The narrator advises almost nervously that "all of this was no more than suspicion that was snuffed out when Doña Marina gave birth." Yet the indeterminacy of her child's paternity lingers almost because of explicit narrative contentions otherwise (66). According to this ambiguous narrative of her pregnancy, Marina's illicit sexuality shapes the difficult nature of her birth, the "excesses to which she had vehemently devoted herself" afflicting her with "birth pains" and visions of "Death, surrounded by

horrifying specters" (97). She becomes a "madwoman of the house" in her pain, "endless torments" visiting her "frenetic imagination," and rendering her oblivious to the political exigencies of her enslavement; during the birth, she is afraid of "neither Hernán Cortés nor all of the earth's princes gathered together." Even the narrator hesitates to explain the significance of her altered state during her labor, asking instead: "What, in effect, are human considerations before the excited imagination of a woman?" (98).

In a novel replete with assaulted, raped, and enslaved women, Marina's son by a Spaniard – her production of the first *mestizo*, synecdoche of the future nation – carries an uncertain ideological valence: on the one hand, ostensible redemption for the corrupted mother; on the other, an anxious indeterminacy of paternal identity for the child and those he implicitly represents. The final book of the novel describes the "moans and laments" of an indigenous woman raped by a Spaniard, who is found "lying on top of his wretched victim, who ha[s] already fainted," though her attacker is "still passionately in the midst of his ferocious lechery." The entire scene of necrophilic assault, and particularly the ensuing demise of the raped woman, clearly provides a foil for Marina's survival. As one of the neighbors puts it, praising the victim, "upon losing her honor, she also lost her life . . . [and] died like a good Tlaxcalan" (134). Unlike Marina, who embodies both "Mexico's Eve" and its "astute serpent," she will not bear a child. The reproductive narrative within *Jicoténcal* thus provides a historical view of the Conquest of Mexico that foregrounds both the international politics of sexuality and the sexuality of international politics. "The sovereignty of states is like a woman's honor," the narrator analogizes: "neither one nor the other is more than the object of contempt . . . when self-interest, corruption, weakness or any other cause make them yield their appreciable jewel" (128). It is precisely the contemporary historical context of the novel that inspires this problematic pronouncement about the Conquest: the vulnerability of those new American states that had thrown off Spanish rule in the few years preceding *Jicoténcal*'s publication, and the international desirability, in particular, of one that had not: the island of Cuba, that most "appreciable jewel" known from afar as the "pearl of the West Indies."¹⁰²

Within the sexual and reproductive economy of the novel, Marina emerges finally as a figure far more complex than the victimized, betraying Eve of the postindependence, Malinchista tradition. Early in the narrative, Marina reveals to the noble Ordaz that she is "a slave and not a lover of Cortés," and that she has all along "detested his haughty domination." Admiring by contrast "the merit and natural gifts of a man as honest

as Ordaz,” she justifies her proposal to become his clandestine lover by appropriating the economic logic that underlies her status as an enslaved concubine: “not being able, in her condition as slave, to proceed according to her free will, she wished at least to steal from her tyrant any moments that she could, thus taking revenge against his oppression” (40). By taking control of her own sexuality with Ordaz, Marina suggests, she will effectively rob her master of the property he holds in her enslaved body, thereby reclaiming herself through a series of “moments” with a man who is not her owner but her lover. However flawed this logic, Marina’s words nevertheless articulate a critique of the politics of sexuality for the female slave, and suggest the novel’s attempt to imagine her experiences outside the framework established by the Spanish chronicles, which celebrate only her willing love for Cortés, and to place her instead within a new narrative of indigenous female resistance.

Indeed, if the novel unsurprisingly denounces her for alleged promiscuity, it also consistently foregrounds her subversion of European imperial ideologies. When Jicoténcal observes her complete immersion in the society of the conquistadors, wondering if she has been “corrupted and contaminated by these men’s magical arts [which] upset all ideas of what is just and unjust, good and evil,” Marina situates her apparent internalization of the master’s culture – “the criminal appearance that my life exhibits today” – as a strategic investment in the political future. “I endeavor to instruct myself,” she contends, explaining her intention later to be “useful to my people, and to atone, through my future conduct” (59). After the birth of her son, Marina’s critique of her experiences of colonial acculturation grows even more pointed and specific. “From the moment that I became a Christian, my progress along the road to crime was greater than the beautiful virtues of Teutila,” she tells the priest Olmedo, comparing her renunciation of “the religion of [her] ancestors” to Teutila’s steadfast refusal to break her cultural ties. Drawing a new distinction between her physical and her intellectual existence, she announces that she may continue to serve Cortés, to “knead his bread [and] wash his clothes” – but she will also thwart his attempts “to enslave [her] understanding” (120–21) (“esclavizar un entendimiento” [110]).

At the same time, the ending of the novel casts the birth of Marina’s son as an additional potential threat to the Spanish conquerors, directing the reproductive anxieties that have surrounded her pregnancy toward the future subversion of the master who is also effectively her rapist. Twice the text figures Marina’s nursing of her child as a threatening image for

the Spanish captain and his henchmen. When Cortés learns of Marina's repudiation of Christianity and her now open refusal to abet the Spanish Conquest, he speaks at once of their child: "I expressly forbid you from going to the house of Jicoténcal," he tells her. "Your breast-feeding makes these settings dangerous for you and for your son" (125). Cortés's reference to Marina's nursing echoes the earlier response of the Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, who demands that Marina "give [him] that child, redeemed in the blood of the Immaculate Lamb," "for it isn't right that his pure soul nurse with his milk the seeds of idolatry and error." Though the Fray ostensibly refers to Marina's reconversion from Christianity to "the religion of [her] ancestors," she herself knows better than to interpret at face value the argument of a "skillful hypocrite . . . employing Nature's elements" to his own political ends (120–21). The uneasy confluence of nature and culture that the Fray locates in Marina's lactation – the inevitability that her milk will somehow transport indigenous "seeds" to the child of her union with Cortés – suggests the broader anxiety that underlies both his and his captain's focus on this repeated maternal image. For both Cortés and the Fray, Marina's nursing babe figures the national genealogy her body has originated, the *mestizo* descendants of the Conquest who will cast off the imperial power of Spain in the years just before the novel itself is published.

Though *Jicoténcal* recurs throughout its pages to the exoticizing tropes of indigenism, the anonymous novel from Philadelphia nevertheless also counters Cooper's imperialist vision of history by proposing instead a historical understanding in which the meaning of progress is not merely questioned but disputed, in which genocide is not cast as inevitable but acknowledged and patiently documented against the "panegyrics" of the conquerors' chronicles. At the same time, if Cooper's novel incorporates and excises what it casts as a transmerican impurity embodied in the West Indies-born Cora, *Jicoténcal* propounds a pan-American consciousness through the indigenous protagonists it valorizes. "Are you still an American?" Jicoténcal asks Marina after observing her immersion in Spanish culture: "Does the flame of love of country still burn inside you?" (59). Conflating the language of patriotism with the rhetoric of racial consciousness and cultural belonging, the Tlaxcalan hero invokes an "American" designation that affiliates him to Marina across the borders of their respective indigenous nations – a transnational designation that anticipates José Martí's "Nuestra América," descended in his influential formulation from a pan-American indigenous mother, and questions the insular, nationalist use of the term in Cooper's novel and in US literary history more generally.¹⁰³

WILLIAM HICKLING PRESCOTT: THE DISCOURSE OF
CONQUEST IN THE 1840S

The interweaving lines of literary affiliation surrounding *Jicoténcal* and its anglophone contemporary *The Last of the Mohicans* produce a lineal descendant of both historical works in the magisterial three-volume *History of the Conquest of Mexico* by the notable historian and man of letters, William Hickling Prescott, whose massively influential project was the most famous of the mid-century histories of the Spanish Conquest of Mexico. Appearing in 1843, seventeen years after the initial publications of *Jicoténcal* and *The Last of the Mohicans*, Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico* similarly addressed a number of questions about the relation of historical writing to its sources as well as to literary genres; and like the 1826 novels, Prescott's work crystallized the mutually informing pressures of nationalism and historical understanding, and of historical writings about the Americas in particular as registers and bearers of transamericanism.

Like both Cooper and the anonymous author(s) of *Jicoténcal*, Prescott fashioned himself as a literary inheritor of Scott, whom he called "the true romantic historian" and clearly saw as a model for the construction of historical narrative.¹⁰⁴ Prescott's volumes shared with *Jicoténcal* an ambition to map the Spanish Conquest of Mexico onto an imaginative literary terrain: to "present a picture true in itself," as Prescott wrote in his preface, "but to place it in its proper light, and to put the spectator in a proper point of view for seeing it to the best advantage . . . to surround him with the spirit of the times, and, in a word, to make him, if I may so express myself, a contemporary of the sixteenth century."¹⁰⁵ But if *Jicoténcal* strove to view Mexican colonial history through "the philosopher's shrewd eye," Prescott believed to the contrary, as he wrote in his private notes on the project, that "the true way of conceiving the subject is not as a philosophical theme but as an *epic in prose*, a romance of chivalry; as romantic and chivalrous as any which Boiardo or Ariosto ever fabled, – and almost as marvelous."¹⁰⁶ Undertaking what Prescott believed was "without doubt, the most poetic subject ever offered to the pen of the historian," *Conquest of Mexico* thus exploited a literary mode that its author repeatedly referred to as "the air of romance rather than of sober history." The New England historian confessed himself in fact unable to treat his subject "according to the severe rule prescribed by historical criticism," so appealing to him was the story of "the subversion of a great empire by a handful of adventurers . . . with all its strange and picturesque accompaniments," "adventurous and romantic as any legend devised by Norman or Italian bard of chivalry" (1.ix). Located

in the productive tension between the two sister muses – the “humbler” one ever seeking to imitate her “sacred” counterpart – Prescott’s *Conquest of Mexico* thus inverted the venerable sibling hierarchy perpetuated by Cooper, aspiring toward the domain of romantic literature despite its generic status as a history.

Yet if Prescott’s approach to his historical subject was shaped by his generic orientation toward the romance of chivalry, his relation to his sources and to historical understanding itself drew contradictorily upon the rhetoric of the so-called Black Legend.¹⁰⁷ Propounded initially in British and then in Anglo-American writings on the Spanish Conquest of the Americas, the Black Legend, as it has since been termed by twentieth-century historians, was comprised of a particular set of historical narratives and perspectives that cast the Spanish conquistadors as bloodthirsty, Catholic villains who preyed mercilessly upon the hemisphere’s indigenous races, who were simultaneously characterized as gentle and culturally advanced to an extent that ostensibly set them apart from the indigenous races of the United States. As Eric Wertheimer has argued, the Black Legend’s representations of Incas and Aztecs “invite the Anglo epic poet to see himself in their New World experiments in civilization,” while “the ‘barbaric’ North American Indians, who offer no useful points of imperial or political identity, are, by a contrasting logic, suitable for removal.”¹⁰⁸ The Black Legend provided a powerful historiographical device within Anglo-American accounts of the Conquest and narratives of US exceptionalism: its implicit denigration of the contemporary Spanish Americas conveniently gave rhetorical support to a variety of US political positions toward Latin America, while its privileging of ancient Latin American indigenous civilizations highlighted the alleged barbarism of contemporary North American Indians and helped to justify nineteenth-century US Indian policy. Prescott draws partially upon the Black Legend in a series of brief asides and chapter subsections devoted to critiquing the major Spanish and indigenous chronicles upon which the volumes relied. These evaluations of his sources betray a series of contradictory anxieties surrounding his own project as a US historian of pre-Conquest and colonial Mexico, refracting the unspoken political and social exigencies of his own historical moment, from questions about the future of US-Latin American relations to concerns over Anglo-indigenous conflicts in the United States to questions of racial mixture throughout the Americas.

Prescott’s most frequent criticism of his Spanish sources involves what he charges are overly nationalist perspectives of the Conquest, a religious “fanaticism” and “zealous” love of country that obscure their interpretations

of historical fact. Condemning such religious “bigotry” and “bastard patriotism,” Prescott proves eager to confirm his own status as a non-Catholic and an anglophone writer even as he registers his preoccupation with the ethnic differences that he understands to be manifest in the historical sources themselves. Repeatedly announcing his Protestantism, he pauses in the preface to disavow the use of language in the Spanish writings that have been “imported” at considerable risk into his own text, complaining of the “barbarous phraseology of [his] Mexican authorities” and of their “obsolete and even barbarous” orthography. In his approach to the material remains of sixteenth-century indigenous culture, Prescott reveals a similar ambivalence toward the “dark and doubtful nature” of Mexico’s native “races.” As with the Spanish chronicles, he finds himself repulsed by the “barbarous nomenclature of [indigenous] vernacular,” the “profusion of uncouth names in the Mexican orthography which bristle over every page.” Prescott thus envies words themselves not only as markers of civilization or its lack, but as potentially miscegenating repositories of racial and ethnic impurity, somehow imbued with a contagious power to degenerate the larger anglophone text into which, in this case, they have pointedly not been imported. Yet he nevertheless finds the “national partiality” that he condemns in the Spanish “excusable” in the writings of the Tezcuco native Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl – charming, even, in “the descendant of a proud line, shorn of its ancient splendors, which it was soothing to his own feelings to revive again . . . on the canvass of history” (1.482, 53, 207).

The contradictions informing Prescott’s fluctuating deployment of the Black Legend are especially noticeable in his analysis of the two histories upon which the narrative of *Jicoténcal* had drawn years earlier. To the Anglo-American historian’s eye, the nationalist Spanish chronicler Antonio de Solís failed in his *Conquista de Méjico* – the target of much of *Jicoténcal*’s historiographical revisionism – largely because he cast the indigenous Mexicans as “part of the grand confederacy of Satan,” which opposed the virtuous Christian empire of the Spanish. Solís damages his credibility by registering his views so extremely, Prescott charges, when he ought simply to have “regard[ed] the benighted heathen with the usual measure of aversion in which they were held in the Peninsula” (3.227–28). Of course, in Prescott’s own historical moment, US Indian policy had itself replaced an earlier form of Anglo-American religious antipathy for Native Americans with far more institutional means of destruction: the nineteenth-century historian could thus distance himself from the religious fanaticism he attributes to Solís while naturalizing more strictly legislative “measure[s] of aversion,” such as the US Indian Removal Act of 1830. At the same

time, Prescott's indignant reaction to Solís convolutes his own earlier pronouncements on the nature of the Mexican Conquest and the appropriate means of recording its history. Now he avows that Solís's "defect" of religious "bigotry" is "repugnant to the philosophic spirit which should preside over the labors of the historian," to "one trained in the school of the great English historians" – and denigrates above all in the Spanish chronicler's work the way in which "[h]istory assumes the air of romance" (3.226–27).

Prescott's analysis of the life and historical writings of the Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, upon which *Jicoténcal* also relies, similarly reveals a set of overlapping US national concerns. Prescott's Las Casas is simultaneously, within the space of two pages and a series of syntactical elisions, an "uncompromising advocate of freedom" and a figure who, wrongly maligned for having "introduced Negro slavery into the New World," was nevertheless not above "the reproach of having recommended the measure at all" (1.377–78). Effectively endorsing Las Casas's notorious proposition to replace indigenous with imported African laborers, Prescott advises that the colonial priest "may well be forgiven" by contemporary readers of history for what was, "however mistaken," a "suggestion of humanity" – given the disparity between the "feeble and effeminate" indigenous American and the African, "more fitted by his constitution to endure the climate and the severe toil imposed on the slave" (1.379). Yet if Prescott arrives at his estimation of Las Casas as a historical figure by weighing his "unadvised" suggestion to import African slaves against his shared belief in their constitutional difference, he paradoxically argues for the dangers of the colonial priest's written account of New World Conquest, his *History of the Indies* – going so far as to "regret that the book was ever written" (1.381). Las Casas's "defect as a historian," as Prescott explains, "is, that he wrote history, like everything else, under the influence of one dominant idea" – an unfortunate intellectual weakness that left him "always pleading the cause of the persecuted native" (1.384). The potential implications of this point of view for his own contemporary readers are clear to the US historian. Las Casas's history simply "should not be published," Prescott warns, "without a suitable commentary to enlighten the student, and guard him against any undue prejudices in the writer" (1.385). Alarmed by the "violence and rapine" in Las Casas's account, "which border on the ridiculous," and by his "numerical findings," also examples of "wild extravagance" (1.381), Prescott clearly seeks to replace this particular source with his own literary-historical model of adventure and romance. However much he deplores this conflation in Solís, in other words, he reinscribes it throughout *Conquest of Mexico*,

aligning his historical strategies with Cooper's rather than with those informing *Jicoténcal*.

Nowhere is this clearer than in Prescott's portrayal of Doña Marina, who ministers as "the good angel of the expedition" at numerous points in Prescott's account (2.16). While *Jicoténcal* produces a version of Marina that disputes the portrait offered within the chronicles, Prescott's history uncritically replicates the Spanish colonial figure of Cortés's indigenous mistress, celebrating her to the point of near authorial obsession. A cross-cultural figure even in the nineteenth century, Marina appeared before anglophone readers in the second book of Prescott's account, where he deemed it "necessary to acquaint the reader with something of her character and history" because of her "most important influence on [the] fortunes" of the Spanish. Carefully documenting each of his sources, Prescott describes her background as "one of the female slaves given to [Cortés] by the Tabascan chiefs" to whom she was sold as a child by itinerant traders after her "Mexican" (Nahuatl) mother had cast her off in favor of her son by a second marriage. Throughout, Prescott continues to observe Marina's "uncommon personal attractions," her "generous temper," and above all her loyalty: "She always remained faithful to the countrymen of her adoption" – by whom he means her Spanish (rather than her Tabascan) owners. Glossing rapidly over Marina's sexual relationship with Cortés, Prescott notes simply that the Spanish captain "made her his interpreter . . . and, won by her charms, his mistress," and that she "had a son by him" (1.295–97).

Lest his readers judge her harshly, Prescott concedes that Marina "had her errors," but advises that "they should be rather charged to the defects of early education, and to the evil influence of him to whom in the darkness of her spirit she looked with simple confidence for the light to guide her" (1.297). This evaluation of Cortés, unusually condemnatory of the "remarkable man" and "cheerful" adventurer characterized elsewhere in the history, suggests the depth of Prescott's desire to present Marina in a favorable light to his readers (1.260, 258). By the time she reappears in the third book of the history, she has become "an intrepid woman," a defender of the Spaniards who valiantly affirms in the midst of battle with the Tlaxcalans that "[t]he God of the Christians is with us, and He will carry us safely through" (1.430). Clearly invested in Marina's fate as a historical figure to be judged by future generations, Prescott admits in a footnote "some discordance in the notices of the early life of Marina" recorded in the chronicles but hastens to add, with apparent relief, that there is "happily no difference in the estimate of her singular merits and services" (1.298). Praising her beauty and her actions throughout his volumes, the historian directs readers

carefully in their interpretations of Cortés's most "lovely Indian mistress" (3.205).

The particular rhetoric of Prescott's commentary on Marina thus betrays a not purely scholarly fascination with the indigenous woman who translated for Cortés, providing for him "a certain, though somewhat circuitous channel . . . for communicating with the Aztecs." Even before he references her sexual liaison with the Spanish captain, Prescott describes her initial dependence on another indigenous interpreter for communication with the Spaniards, slyly noting that "it was not very long . . . before Marina, who had a lively genius, made herself so far mistress of the Castilian as to supersede the necessity of any other linguist" (1.296). The obvious double signification of "mistress" in this discussion of international diplomacy exemplifies the imperialist erotics of his historical subject more generally, to which he himself is admittedly not inured. For an author not entirely in control of his own material, as he confesses openly in the preface, "fact" and the "fiction" of romance are not easily distinguished given "the seductions of the subject" of the Conquest (1.ix–x). Gravely noting the precise moment when "the name of Marina disappears from the page of history" – when "Cortés gave Marina away to a Castilian knight, Don Juan Xamarillo, to whom she was wedded as his lawful wife" – Prescott pronounces that "this, too, is the last occasion on which she will appear in these pages" of his own history. Marina's transfer from her first Spanish owner to another master and future legal spouse holds an almost personal importance for Prescott, for he refers to it as not simply Cortés's but his own "parting with her." Seduced by his subject, the romantic historian must leave behind the translator, the mistress, and, perhaps most significantly, the slave with whom he finds himself now nearly in love (3.291–93).

Thus, where *Jicoténcal* envisions Marina as a literary-historical figure ultimately engaged in the acts of resistance that are her personal and political redemption, Prescott cannot imagine her but through the master's fantasy of the devoted female slave. The US historian who aspired to make his readers "in a word, contemporaries of the sixteenth century," was ultimately unable to write history beyond the perspective of the master culture defining his own moment. In the final chapter of the last book of his history, Prescott cites from Cortés's will and testament, which proffered at the end the "remarkable declaration" that his son Martín and his heirs must grapple with the question of "whether one can conscientiously hold property in Indian slaves" – and must "spare no pains to come to an exact knowledge of the truth; as a matter which deeply concerns the conscience of each of them, no less than [his own]" (3.345). Cortés's testimonial legacy launches

Prescott into a concluding meditation on the unlikely outcome of the conquistador's final injunction to his descendants regarding the enslavement of indigenous Americans. Considering "the great question of slavery . . . which exists in our time, when we may hope it is approaching its conclusion," Prescott contends that the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries have much in common. Las Casas and his contemporary Dominicans were "the abolitionists of the day, thundering out their uncompromising invectives against the system" while the "great mass of proprietors troubled their heads very little about the question of right, but were satisfied with the expediency of the institution." To the historian's eye, however, the "more considerate and conscientious" thinkers were those who "admitted the evil" but "found an argument for its toleration in the plea of necessity." In his own era, slavery was a disease with a natural course to run, Prescott believed; and even one who "admits all the wretchedness of the institution and its wrong to humanity, may nevertheless hesitate to adopt a remedy, until he is satisfied that the remedy itself is not worse than the disease." Rather than watch the institution be "rudely handled . . . shaking the very foundations of the political fabric," Prescott preferred a cheerful "confidence in the ultimate prevalence of the right, and the progressive civilization of his species" (3.345–46).

In their entirety, Prescott's volumes exemplify the historical and conceptual gap separating the hemispheric sensibilities of the 1820s from those of the mid-century, revealing the very different uses to which histories of the Mexican Conquest would be put in the era's public sphere. These histories often enjoyed immediate popular success, as did travel writings about Mexico: "their lucubrations," as one article put it in 1843, "under whatever name – Rambles, Notices, Incidents, Pencillings, – are nearly as important a staple for the 'trade,' as novels and romances."¹⁰⁹ New means of travel, moreover, reshaped the function and content of such literature. "The facilities of communication have, in fact, so abridged distances, that geography, as we have hitherto studied it, may be said to be entirely reformed . . . we find ourselves next door neighbors to those whom we had looked upon as antipodes," even as "[n]ations are so mixed up by this process that they are in some danger of losing their idiosyncrasy."¹¹⁰ If new forms of travel, communication, and cultural confrontation had destabilized the antipodal structure of US national self-imagining, historical writings about the Spanish Conquest of Mexico offered an opportunity for reconstituting the polarities of Anglo- and Latin America and for meditating in particular on the mid-century status of Mexico vis-à-vis the United States.

An 1843 article published in the *North American Review*, for example, opened its review of a recent English translation of Cortés's *Despatches* by noting that a "constant succession of internal dissensions and military revolutions" throughout the Spanish Americas "has almost extinguished the sympathetic feeling which, twenty years ago, led the people of the United States, with entire unanimity, to demand the admission of the Southern Republics of America into the great family of nations."¹¹¹ If the reviewer is mistaken about this "entire unanimity" of agreement about the Spanish Americas, the article nevertheless points to a dramatic shift in hemispheric thinking that has occurred between the 1820s and the 1840s. Noting that the US "philanthropist may have been disappointed" in the unfortunate demise of such coalitional potential for the Americas – ostensibly caused by the failure of "well-regulated liberty" throughout Latin America – the reviewer turns happily to "other sources of interest, of a wholly different character, [which] have recently been created in those countries": "Discoveries not of gold or silver mines, but of . . . prolific fields for the researches of the historian and antiquary." In the space of twenty years, the article thus suggests, the Spanish Americas – Mexico in particular – have devolved from putative members of "the great family of nations" in the hemisphere into passive objects of "prolific" historical study for Anglo-American scholars. Of special interest to such scholars are the ancient Central American cities described in what the reviewer terms "the unpretending narratives of [John L.] Stephens," with which "all of [our readers] are of course familiar."¹¹² The specific fascination held by these majestic ruins lies precisely in the racial question of their original builders and inhabitants: "It is not surprising, when we consider the ignorance and abject condition of the natives at the present time, . . . that doubts should be entertained whether their ancestors were capable of accomplishing what the ruins . . . suggest" in the way of advanced civilization.¹¹³

Prescott's volumes on the Conquest of Mexico were considered nothing less than a stellar enactment of Anglo-American patriotism in literary form, as contemporaneous reviews of the work make dramatically clear. Prescott's place "in the first rank of modern historians" or his perceived authorial attributes ("purity of diction, and fine, flowing style in description and narrative, all governed by a genius eminently philosophical") were less important to reviewers than his status as a kind of national symbol: "Americans love him as a cherished member of their household."¹¹⁴ Prescott performed so powerfully in the service of literary nationalism that, as one writer put it, "throughout the Republic of Letters, he is admired as one of its brightest ornaments." Confronted with the "peculiarities of the Spanish

chroniclers," Prescott's Anglo-American "good taste ha[d] pruned their luxuriance and wordiness, and his sound judgment corrected the effects of their excited imaginations and almost unbounded credulity."¹¹⁵ At the same time, while Mexico's current political and social state was continually disparaged in mainstream US periodicals, Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico* served to shore up a sense of racially defined national difference among its Anglo-American readers, so much so that even one English reviewer of the volumes ended his article by noting his countrymen's "deep sympathy, the sympathy of kindred and of blood, with Americans who, like [Prescott], do honor to our common literature."¹¹⁶ Reviews of Prescott suggested collectively, in other words, that Latin America's expulsion from the "great family of nations," as it was understood in the US public sphere, had as much to do with "sympath[ies] of blood," or race, as with accusations of despotism or "internal dissensions."

Perhaps the most important factor contributing to the nationalist fervor inspired by Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico* was what one rare critical review from the 1840s pointed to in the volumes as a spirit of warmongering. "Cortés, as he appears in Mr. Prescott's pages, will leave on the minds of many readers, an impression of admiration; a sort of feeling that he is a model to be imitated," warns the reviewer.¹¹⁷ Observing that *Conquest of Mexico* explicitly valorizes Cortés, despite the fact that he "delivered [indigenous] nations over bound and bleeding to the rapacious agents of a distant despotism," the article argues that Prescott fails as a historian largely because "he treats these horrors as inevitable."¹¹⁸ Prescott's scholarly flaws arise not from a bias for or against either the Spanish invaders or the indigenous Americans but from his authorial romanticizing of the acts of war undertaken by both historical opponents – in his celebration of the "fierce virtues of the Aztecs" as much as the ferocious victories of the Spaniards.¹¹⁹ Though Prescott himself opposed both the annexation of Texas and the US-Mexican conflict, two years before the official outbreak of war, the reviewer warns his readers against the celebratory bellicosity of Prescott's historical approach: "[I]n these days," the history of the Mexican Conquest "ought to be written . . . in the spirit of peace."¹²⁰

Circulated in more than 200 editions since its initial publication, *History of the Conquest of Mexico* influenced generations of subsequent US writers and historians through the nineteenth century. In a more disturbing sign of the cultural work it performed, Prescott's history was widely read by US soldiers during the war with Mexico, which was declared by President Polk just three years after its initial publication.¹²¹ The expanding nation deployed *Conquest of Mexico*, and the "seductions of the subject" that

Prescott had seen as “the most poetic” in the world’s history, as a kind of historical guidebook for the war, a simultaneously thematic and pedagogical “romance” of interracial and cross-cultural military conflict, in which the eventual victory of the imperial power was both preordained and cause for authorial celebration. By the end of the US-Mexican War, a *Harper’s* article on the sixteenth-century Conquest of Mexico could invoke the “atrocities” committed by the Spanish against the indigenous Mexicans quite differently, this time as one explanation for the “dark storms of war and misery” the country had suffered in the nineteenth century: like all of Spain’s former “possessions,” the author mused, “Mexico is still a land of darkness, ignorance and crime” – “Is it thus that national sins are punished?”¹²² The US military acquisition of more than a third of sovereign Mexican territory, in other words, constituted a larger cosmic retribution that Mexico endured as a result of the history of the Spanish Conquest. A more astute cultural critic, quoted in an 1853 issue of *Littells Living Age*, found it to be “worth notice that long before any party in the United States dreamt of an invasion of Mexico, two of the most eminent scholars of Boston [i.e., Prescott and his friend George Ticknor] had devoted their attention to the history and literature of that realm, turning the attention of their countrymen toward those parts which now seem destined to become their virtual inheritance.”¹²³ Prescott had now become a prophet, his writing absorbed into an imperialist aesthetic buttressed by its own inevitability. Far from the vision of collective solidarity among “American” nations proposed in *Jicoténcal*, *Conquest of Mexico* encoded the geopolitical future of US-Mexican relations as an ineluctable repetition of the past it revives.

A francophone view of comparative American literature: Revue des Colonies and the translations of abolition

FRANCOPHOBIA AND ITS DISCONTENTS IN THE 1830S

This chapter turns from *Jicoténcal* and the contradictory logic of inter-American affiliation and cross-continental enthusiasm that characterized several competing public spheres of the 1820s to the next decade's consolidation of a largely southern, proslavery nativism directed specifically at the francophone West Indies. Yet the nativism of the 1830s had strong roots already in the previous decade: the anglophone ideal of New World solidarity emerging in the 1820s had never truly been hemispheric in the geographic sense of the word. Even at the height of its avowals of New World fellowship, of kinship "with every American, whatever language he may speak," the Anglo-American vision of a united hemisphere of free, democratic nations failed to embrace the francophone Caribbean, all of it still firmly under French colonial rule – with the notorious exception, of course, of Haiti.¹

As the first nation of the Americas to legislate abolition, Haiti represented an obvious threat to the slaveholding economy of the United States. An independent state created out of the insurrection of slaves and free people of color, Haiti embodied as well a concrete range of terrors in the Anglo-American literary and political imagination directed at the francophone Caribbean more generally.² Long before the 1830s, Jefferson had made the connection between the revolutions that produced Haiti and the ubiquitous possibility of slave revolt within the United States, observing that the "West Indies appears to have given considerable impulse to the minds of the slaves . . . in the United States."³ It was no secret to early nineteenth-century US slaveholders that Haiti had constituted a model for the major slave insurrections led by Gabriel Prosser and Denmark Vesey, in 1800 and 1822 respectively.⁴ It is not surprising, then, that the possibility of French West Indian influence within US borders would evoke a profound uneasiness about the frequent inter-American travel of free people of color from the

French Caribbean. The Saint-Dominguean Creole protest songs reported to have been sung among slaves on Louisiana plantations were but one measure of the pervasive cultural transmission of the Haitian Revolution.⁵ The largest slave revolt in US history, occurring in southern Louisiana in 1811, was in fact led by at least one free immigrant from Saint-Domingue, Charles Deslondes.⁶ As early as the 1790s, southern states began passing restrictions on the emigration of free people of color from the French West Indies; by the early nineteenth century, some slaveholders had identified traveling “French Negroes” specifically (whether free or enslaved) as a threat to their peculiar institution.⁷

Alongside this increasing unease over the proximity of the francophone Caribbean came a dramatic series of attempts in the 1830s to forestall the literary transmission of an abolitionist politics with which this population was (sometimes inaccurately) associated. In 1829 David Walker’s famous *Appeal* had made explicit references to Haiti in its call for resistance to slavery and racial oppression, instructing the “colored citizens” of the United States to “go to our brethren, the Haytians, who, according to their word, are bound to protect and comfort us.”⁸ Two years later, Nat Turner’s 1831 rebellion in Southampton, Virginia, prompted proslavery southerners to locate the threat of subsequent US slave revolts precisely in the written transmission of dissidence, outlawing the distribution and possession of the *Liberator*, an abolitionist journal that they credited with spawning rebellious behavior among their slaves.⁹ Turner’s uprising spread fear throughout the slaveholding South, famously changing its cultural landscape through the resultant legislation against literacy among slaves. Though much less studied than its anglophone counterpart, a dissenting francophone print culture emerging in the early nineteenth-century United States became a logical scapegoat for a slaveholding South already terrorized by the history of Haiti and convinced of the dangers of mass migrations from the French West Indies.

The decade of the 1830s began with a series of events in the sphere of francophone journalism that mobilized an already fearful southern political culture. In 1830 *Le Libéral*, a French-language newspaper in Louisiana, critically publicized a law passed in the state capital that had prohibited the entrance of free people of color. While legislators continued to press for new expulsion decrees and emigration restrictions, *Le Libéral*’s coverage ultimately proved sufficiently effective to ensure the subsequent emendation of the relevant state laws such that only those free persons of color who had arrived after 1825 could be subjected to the statutes’ provisions.¹⁰ Within a matter of months, however, the same legislature passed a law

that would profoundly shape the political and literary character of southern French-language print culture over the succeeding decade, effectively prohibiting the publication or dissemination of writings or speeches that criticized either the institution of slavery or the nation's congealing racial politics:

... whosoever shall make use of language, in any public discourse . . . having a tendency to produce discontent among the free coloured population of this state, or to excite insubordination among the slaves therein, or whosoever shall knowingly bring into this state, any paper, pamphlet or book, having such tendency as aforesaid, shall on conviction thereof, before any court of competent jurisdiction, suffer imprisonment at hard labour . . . or death, at the discretion of the court.¹¹

Thus while the 1820s saw the rise of a northeastern hispanophone publishing arena emerging alongside an anglophone public sphere espousing a sensibility of New World idealism and hemispheric solidarity, the succeeding decade witnessed the systematic legal repression of a dissenting francophone public sphere in the South. In a twist of historical irony, the 1830s were also the very years of rising national literacy rates that adumbrated a golden age of early anglophone US magazines. The francophone print culture that fell under siege during this epoch of thriving political journalism and literary periodicals was produced largely by and about free people of color and was but one product of the transamerican literary relations studied in this book. But the French-language literary culture of the 1830s was also ultimately a casualty of the period's crisis in national identity vis-à-vis the wider Americas and particularly the Caribbean: a rich and promising period within US literary history that was irrevocably foreshortened by contemporaneous legislation and suppression.

The present chapter examines just one strand of this francophone literary history by turning to a little-known periodical based in Paris, where it became a frequent outlet for the very sort of dissenting writings that had been repressed in the southern United States of the 1830s. As its name suggests, the *Revue des Colonies* was devoted explicitly to material of and about the colonies of Western imperialism, largely those of the Americas. Published during the 1830s and early 1840s, the French-based journal was sponsored by a small group of Caribbean intellectuals calling themselves the Société des Hommes de Couleur (Society of Men of Color), a group that, like the author(s) of *Jicoténcal*, was forced to write in exile and under the pressures of potential imprisonment upon any return to their homelands.¹² The Caribbean contributors to the *Revue* included the New Orleans-born

writer Victor Séjour, author of what is now recognized as the first short story in the African American literary tradition. "Le Mulâtre" appeared in an 1837 issue of the *Revue* – its explicit commentary on slavery and racial oppression obviously precluding the possibility of publication in Séjour's Louisiana birthland. In other parts of the southern United States, Martinique, and Guadeloupe (not to mention Cuba), similar restrictions on such writings obtained.¹³ Even in postcolonial, independent Haiti, by 1835 the repressive Boyer government had shut down the literary and political periodical run by the historian Émile Nau, whose brother, the poet Ignace Nau, would then turn to the *Revue* as a means of reaching print and a public readership.

The *Revue* thus provided a collective forum for the literary and political dissent of its Caribbean contributors even as its own journalistic mission exposed the censorious atmospheres of the current and former slaveholding colonies that comprised its subject. An 1836 issue, for example, turns its attention to the newspapers of the United States in particular.¹⁴ Placing original literary contributions alongside nonliterary writings on the institutions of slavery and their attendant legal histories of racial oppression, the *Revue* offered an extended series of juxtapositions that encouraged its readers to see the junctures of history and literature, politics and artistry, as part of a larger and still emerging story shaping a transamerican public sphere. At the center of this story stood Haiti, the primary historical and literary referent for the journal's larger project of dissent. In a moment when most Western governments still refused the Haitian state any form of diplomatic acknowledgment, and when proslavery US newspapers disseminated gruesome images highlighting the brutality of Saint-Domingue's revolting slaves as support for legislation favoring their own interests, the *Revue* promoted a detailed collection of correctives to most of the world's accepted history of the slave uprisings that had produced the Haitian Revolution and the future nation itself. Moreover, through its complex mixture of writings recording and analyzing journalism, travel narratives, legal history, economic production, and intellectual debates from throughout the Americas, the *Revue* placed its documentation of the continuing slave trade and the dramatic rise of legislation based on racial hierarchies within a self-consciously transnational critical framework. Such a framework directly opposed not only the crude economic interests but the very political paradigm preferred by US slaveholders, who themselves well understood, as we saw in the Prologue, that the institution of slavery was best protected as part of a nationally demarcated "domestic question." It was, after all, precisely the

inter-American alliance between the South American leader Bolívar and the Haitian President Alexandre Pétion that had set the stage for abolition in the new Spanish-American republics. Nationalism and slaveholding interests clearly went hand in hand, as the *Revue* repeatedly revealed for its readers.

Over the course of its intermittent run, the *Revue* became the most radical abolitionist publication in France, the first to call for the immediate rather than gradual emancipation of slaves in the colonies. Well over a decade before Frederick Douglass launched *The North Star* to promote the abolitionist movement in the United States, the *Revue* was inciting the fury of advocates of slavery throughout the Americas and, by 1847, the crucial attention of those French Conseils Généraux who came out in favor of emancipation the year before slavery was permanently abolished in the French colonies in 1848.¹⁵ The *Revue* remains nevertheless largely unknown to literary historians; documented in a few sociological and historical studies, the journal has been overlooked in even the most recent and exhaustive histories of Caribbean literature.¹⁶

Most importantly for the purposes of this chapter, the *Revue* gives us a wider historical view of the young tradition that Channing had repudiated in his "Essay on American Language and Literature" in the 1815 *North American Review* by providing a much less narrowly canonical understanding of the place of early US literary production, as well as that of the nineteenth century, within a transnational literary-historical trajectory. Taking for its primary subject the racial politics that forms the absent center of Channing's famous essay, the *Revue's* wide selection of creative writings and literary criticism offers a sweeping perspective on what today might be called a comparative American literature. Like *Jicoténcal*, then, the *Revue* suggests a series of alternative genealogies for American literary history, demanding through its very methodology a critical awareness of the limitations of any single national literary narrative. The *Revue* became in this sense a forum for inter-American historical revisionism and anti-imperialism, a project in which a brilliantly eclectic literary consciousness worked to recruit an array of writers for its cause: the French abolitionist priest and literary historian Henri Grégoire, the eighteenth-century poet Phillis Wheatley, the nineteenth-century Haitian poet Ignace Nau, as well as Séjour, among many others. Finally, while foregrounding the inextricability of the literary history of the United States from the global economic and political forces that shaped it, the *Revue's* legacy was also in part to open a critical window onto the transnational and multilingual dimensions of a specifically African American tradition within early US literary history.

CYRILLE BISSETTE AND (TRANS)AMERICAN REVOLUTION

In the first line of its opening issue of July 1834, the *Revue des Colonies, recueil mensuel de la politique, de l'administration, de la justice, de l'instruction et des moeurs coloniales* (*Review of the Colonies, a monthly compilation devoted to colonial politics, administration, justice, education, and mores*) announced boldly that "the colonies in general do not yet know more than the theory of the great philanthropic principles; of liberty in action, they know nothing" (3). Serving as the journal's *raison d'être*, the point of departure for its own self-identified goal of bringing "the greatest publicity" and thus a "clarified public opinion" to the subject of "the suffering and oppressed classes" of the colonial world, the assertion is but the first of the journal's many pronouncements upon the irreconcilable gaps between theory and practice, between the philosophical premises of the French Revolution and the entirely incongruent realities of racial policies and institutions in France's colonies.¹⁷ By the concluding article of the same July issue, an obituary of the French general and statesman the marquis de Lafayette, who had died the previous May, the *Revue* pauses in its coverage of colonial news to celebrate a political figure who ostensibly "did not confine himself to theory but combined it with practice, a very rare thing" (39). The article recounts the well-known "political life" of Lafayette: "the generous part he played in the revolution of 1789: the force of logic, the simple clarity, the inalterable faith with which he advanced before the National Assembly and in the Constituent the sainted principles for which we fought." But the obituary reminds readers as well of a presumably less familiar part of Lafayette's biography: that "more than once he raised his voice against the slavery of blacks and the injustice that excluded men of color from the exercise of their civil rights" – and that "as early as 1791, the general freed all the slaves of his possessions in French Guyana" (39). As the article praises the general's rhetorical activism on behalf of "*noirs*" and "*gens de couleur*" for "liberty and all the prerogatives of whites," it simultaneously reveals the inextricability of French revolutionary history from the ongoing practice of slavery and racial oppression in the colonies (40). Adopting a strategy that recurs in its succeeding issues, the *Revue* recontextualizes a particular national historical moment within the global frame of colonialism, demanding that its readers consider the historiographical revisionism implied in its self-conscious juxtapositions.

But if the *Revue's* explicit purpose was to lay bare the discrepancies between France's political ideals and its colonial practices, its pursuit of these contradictions overlay a revealing examination of the particular role

played by the United States within the ongoing drama of the colonies. Even the obituary of Lafayette that concludes the *Revue's* first issue evokes a revolutionary heritage overlapping both French and US national narratives even as it foregrounds the inter-American institutions of slavery that underpinned and betrayed the ideals of both revolutions. Designating Lafayette as the "illustrious friend of Washington," the article recounts the young aristocrat's awakening to the causes of liberty when "news of the insurrection of America arrived in Europe":

The brilliant cavalier . . . had not so much finished reading the manifesto of American independence when it had already been won. The reading of the Declaration of Rights made M. de Lafayette into the person we have seen, an indefatigable advocate for the oppressed, regardless of nation or of color, and the most sincere and ardent promoter of universal liberty. The intrepid volunteer landed with an incredible joy upon the land to which he was going to give his blood, where Jefferson, Adams, and Washington waited for him, and from which he did not return until after he had secured, with his illustrious friends, through the capitulation of Yorktown that terminated the War of Independence in October, 1781, the national existence of the grand and serene republic that was for him always an object of lively and patriotic affection.

(Le brillant cavalier . . . n'a pas sitôt lu le manifeste de l'indépendance américaine que la voilà gagnée. La lecture de la Déclaration des Droits fit de M. de Lafayette ce que nous l'avons vu, l'infatigable avocat des opprimés, sans distinction de nation ni de couleur, et le promoteur le plus sincère et le plus ardent de la liberté universelle. L'intrépide volontaire aborda avec une incroyable joie cette terre à laquelle il allait donner de son sang, où Jefferson, Adam et Washington l'attendaient, et d'où il ne revint qu'après avoir assuré, avec ses illustres amis, par la capitulation de Yorktown, qui termina la guerre de l'indépendance en octobre 1781, l'existence nationale de la grande et sereine république qui fut toujours pour lui l'objet d'une vive et patriotique affection.) (39)

The *Revue's* account of Lafayette's dramatic conversion emphasizes the political potency and unrestrictable mobility of both the written word and the act of reading, tracing the general's military career to the arrival in France of the text of the US "Declaration of Rights" – a document that ostensibly unites "la théorie" and "la pratique" as the journal itself clearly hopes to do. At the same time, however, the journal's depiction of Lafayette's dubiously rapid transformation into "an indefatigable advocate for the oppressed" – long before the freeing of his own slaves in French Guyana – underscores the ways in which the national narrative of the "insurrection" producing the United States was also irrevocably destabilized by the dark underside of its revolution, the institution of slavery fracturing its own self-stated

ideals: the qualifying phrase “regardless . . . of color,” a seeming non sequitur in the context of Lafayette’s role in this revolution, exposes the extent to which the very concept of “universal liberty” is made coherent only by the unnamed presence of an enslaved “American” population. Indeed, the “serene republic” that garners Lafayette’s lifelong affection is one upon which the *Revue des Colonies* will keep a careful eye in its succeeding issues. In this sense, the very title of the journal in some ways disguises its other major function; it acts not only as a source of corrective information about the racial realities of life in the colonies vis-à-vis postrevolutionary metropolitan France, but also as a kind of watchdog on US economic and political interests both at home and in the Americas. Covering events ranging from the burning of African American churches to the rise of abolitionist magazines in the northeast to national legislation related to the Caribbean, the *Revue* rigorously surveys the ideological foundations on which the United States was building much of its cultural production.

While the founding of the *Revue* represented the collective effort of a group of *gens de couleur*, free men of mixed European-African descent, it was organized, edited, and in fact largely written by a single individual, a Martiniquan exile and formerly prosperous merchant, Cyrille Charles Auguste Bissette. Member of an elite class among the *gens de couleur*, Bissette had himself, like Lafayette, been an owner of slaves before a series of events that led to the onset of his reformist career.¹⁸ In fact, in the early 1820s, just over ten years before his launching of the abolitionist *Revue*, Bissette had participated with local militias in the suppressing of a slave revolt in northern Martinique, precisely the sort of political event his own journal would document and theorize from a very different point of view during the mid-1830s and early 1840s. Bissette’s political conversion grew out of the conflict between the Martiniquan Creoles, native to the colony but of entirely European descent, *les blancs*, and the *gens de couleur*, who by the early nineteenth century outnumbered the Creole population in Martinique, as well as most of the larger Caribbean. It was in fact the Creole establishment’s own tactical error of refusing to grant equivalent legal privileges to the class of *gens de couleur* – many of whom shared their investment in the racial ideologies denigrating the “*noir*” (usually slave) class as well as in the slave economy itself – that ultimately led both to alliances between the two oppressed groups and, indirectly, to the eventual abolition of slavery in the French colonies.

In 1824 Bissette and two fellow *gens de couleur* were arrested for allegedly conspiring to overthrow the colonial regime by distributing a political pamphlet advocating the rights of that class, *De la situation des gens de couleur*

libres. Quickly convicted, the three were branded on the shoulder with the letters GAL, signifying “galley slave,” sentenced to death, then deported to France, where they were eventually freed four years later after a long and much-publicized appeal process. Banned from Martinique, Bisette began an energetic campaign in France for the rights of the *gens de couleur* in the colonies – a campaign eventually catalyzing the 1834 founding of the *Revue des Colonies*, in the pages of which Bisette’s conservative stance toward slavery quickly began to evolve into an explicitly abolitionist agenda unlike any other existing among French intellectuals and political activists during those years. Within the Prospectus outlined in the *Revue*’s first issue, Bisette pronounces the journal’s primary focus to be the “political, intellectual, moral, and industrial interests of the *colonists* of both colors”: “The civil, political, and social rights of the two *free* classes which, until now divided, should now be united, will here be developed and sustained with an indefatigable zeal.” Only secondarily does he proclaim that the “great question of the abolition of slavery, that foundation of liberty, will here be treated with the utmost care and with the most ardent love of equality and the general good.” Initially adopting what historians of slavery have termed a gradualist approach to the emancipation of slaves, Bisette here writes from the tautological assumption that the abolition of slavery is fundamental to the promotion of liberty, and thus a noble goal, while nevertheless treating the issue as a “great question” to be considered not in absolute terms but in relation to the “general good,” including of course the good of both of the “two free classes,” *blancs* and *gens de couleur*, the most powerful of whom certainly owned slaves.

As the obituary of Lafayette reveals, however, even in the first issue of the *Revue* Bisette already shows a tendency to envision his advocacy for the *gens de couleur* as inseparably yoked to the existence of slavery, the “injustice that exclude[s] men of color from the exercise of their civil rights” as an inevitable corollary to the racial ideologies that sustain the “slavery of blacks.” Four months later, in the November issue of 1834, the former slaveowner, now wearing the permanent mark of the galley slave, defined the *Revue*’s main objective not as the legal and social equality of the “two free classes” but as the immediate and unconditional abolition of slavery in the French colonies and throughout the world:

This is at once the means and the goal.

By the abolition of slavery indeed and through the return of the men of the two races to the principles of fraternity, the politics of the colonies will undergo change. Instead of this odious designation of masters and slaves, there will be only citizens of one homeland, only men carrying out, under the protection of common law,

works of diverse nature, without which there is neither well-being nor glory for any society.

(C'est là tout à la fois le moyen et le but.

Par l'abolition de l'esclavage en effet et par le retour des hommes des deux races aux principes de la fraternité, la politique des colonies change de face. Au lieu de cette odieuse dénomination de maîtres et d'esclaves, il n'y a plus que des citoyens d'une même patrie, que des hommes se livrant, sous la protection du droit commun, aux travaux de diverses natures sans lesquels il n'y a ni bien-être ni gloire pour les sociétés.) (5)

In doing so, Bissette became one of the earliest abolitionists in France, as the historian Lawrence Jennings has shown, and certainly the most radical during the decade of the 1830s, when he was the first to call for the immediate rather than gradual emancipation of slaves in the colonies.¹⁹ At the same time, as Chris Bongie has argued, Bissette's writings and wider career anticipate a sensibility evident in the work of modern and contemporary Caribbean intellectuals such as Aime Césaire and Édouard Glissant, an affinity that points to what Bongie defines more generally as a "post/colonial" complicity linking colonial and postcolonial epistemic formations despite their ostensible polarity. As one of the few literary critics to devote attention to the *Revue*, Bongie warns that its text must be approached by contemporary readers with "the greatest of ambivalence," and evaluated skeptically for its deployment of what he terms "the mulatto vision of History, its faith in France and in print culture," and its manifestation of "the deleterious effects of buying into the colonial distinction between *homme de couleur* and *négre [noir]*."²⁰ Indeed, Bissette's early racial politics and position on slavery register what Nancy Vogeley has suggested are the inherent ambivalences of the concept of "colonial discourse" in the nineteenth-century Americas more generally, "a confusing mixture of oppressing and oppressed voices," entangled in a dialectic of complicity and subversion that often made "colonizers of [the] previously colonized."²¹

In this sense, it is precisely the *Revue*'s so-called "mulatto vision," I would suggest, that makes the journal's perspective such a compelling one to bring to the racial binarisms and corresponding ideological erasures of a contemporaneous US literary and historical landscape. This was a landscape with which Bissette, who read and wrote fluently in English, was not unfamiliar. By the second issue of the journal in August 1834, among his other coverage of US events, he documented the rise of legislation in the southern states designed to prevent the immigration of both *noirs* and *gens de couleur* – in particular, "a law that forbids [state] entrance to any person of color, mulattoes or Negroes, free men or slaves" (9) – travelers who inevitably troubled

an obsessive Anglo-American vision of the impermeability of both national and racial boundaries. If such laws restricted human migrations across the Atlantic and the Caribbean, in the pages of the Paris-based *Revue* literary texts themselves became itinerant, traversing borders of race and ethnicity, language and nation, to reconstitute a variegated international literary arena that worked in the service of the journal's specific political cause.

HENRI GRÉGOIRE AND *DE LA LITTÉRATURE DES NÈGRES*:
JEFFERSONIANISM REVISITED

Bissette found a crucial source for much of the early African American literature that he brought to bear on this arena in the work of Henri Grégoire, a French Catholic priest and political activist who had written about race and colonialism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Grégoire's scholarship on authors of African descent in particular appears to have played a definitive role in Bissette's political conversion from a gradualist to an immediatist opponent of slavery: his declaration that the *Revue* would devote itself to the cause of abolition occurs almost simultaneously with the journal's new focus on disseminating literary history and publishing original literary contributions. (The journal's announcement of its abolitionism occurs in the November 1834 issue, where the first literary contribution appears in the form of a poem recited at an antislavery meeting.) In the early nineteenth century, Grégoire had worked largely to combat a powerful tide of proslavery sentiment pervading France, registered in a variety of French novels, poems, plays, and newspapers (including one run by François Chateaubriand), a literary subculture that sought to vilify the Saint-Domingue slave uprisings that had produced Haiti and to generate sympathy for more than 6,000 white planters and colonists who had fled to France. In the wake of these events, Grégoire had been accused of fomenting an early phase of the revolution by urging Vincent Ogé, a Saint-Dominguean *mulâtre* and advocate for the rights of the *gens de couleur*, to take arms against the colonial government. Ogé's uprising was not directed against the institution of slavery nor in any sense organized on behalf of Saint-Domingue's slaves, and his limited forces were easily put down by a militia of white planters. But his rebellion closely preceded and in some ways laid the groundwork for the large-scale slave revolt led by Toussaint Louverture the following year, in 1791, which ultimately destroyed France's colonial regime in Saint-Domingue. Exploiting the historical proximity and indirect causality between the first revolt and the second, Bissette, with a number of historians and writers from the class of *gens de couleur* throughout

the francophone Caribbean, tended during the first half of the nineteenth century to elide Toussaint's crucial role in the Haitian Revolution and to celebrate instead the relatively minor part played by Ogé, lending him a revered status within a particular historical and literary genealogy that I will explore at length in Chapter Six.

Grégoire himself denied the charge that he had incited Ogé to militant action, contending that he had in fact advised him to seek changes in the colonial legislation by more patient means – as “the success of so just a cause should not be compromised by acting in haste” (43) – but the priest continued to be associated with the causes of revolution by its detractors. Seeking to stem the tide of racial antipathy in France after the Haitian Revolution, Grégoire continued to write against slavery but had only limited success in reaching the public. In 1802, eight years after slavery had been abolished temporarily in the French colonies (for reasons that had more to do with France's imperial struggles against England and Spain than abstract principles), Napoleon Bonaparte's regime reestablished slavery and reinstated the Code Noir legislating matters of race both at home and abroad. Himself married to the daughter of a wealthy planter from Martinique, Bonaparte officially banned the publication of all works even remotely critical of French colonial affairs.²² By 1807 the only remaining antislavery journal, for which Grégoire wrote, was ordered directly by Napoleon to be subsumed by a proslavery, progovernment publication.²³

It was in such a context of heavy governmental censorship that Grégoire changed tactics and published the following year his renowned 1808 volume *De la littérature des Nègres* (*On the literature of Negroes*), a scholarly work devoted to the literature and culture of people of African descent throughout Western history, and particularly in the United States and the wider Americas. Seeking to disguise its political agenda in order to be passed by the censors for publication, Grégoire's study focused primarily on documenting the cultural achievements of its subjects of African descent, attacking the racist theories on which slavery was premised without discussing specific colonial laws or governmental policies. While France had in 1794 been the first imperial power to abolish slavery, Napoleon not only reinstated it but also reestablished the legality of the international slave trade, which was more controversial than the domestic institutions among abolitionists, and which was finally outlawed by both Britain and the United States in 1808. During such a moment of intense international disagreement about the international versus domestic practices of slavery, Grégoire hoped that *De la littérature des Nègres* would have an especially profound impact, nudging the French government in what he perceived as the increasingly abolitionist

direction of England and especially the United States, where the northern states had recently outlawed slavery.²⁴

Though *De la littérature des Nègres* was generally received with contempt and hostility, it quickly became an internationally known text in the theorizing of racial difference as well as the promoting or denouncing of different racial policies throughout the New World. From the United States, Thomas Jefferson commented politely on the book in an 1809 letter to Grégoire, acknowledging the limited scope of his own observations on “Negroes” in the 1785 *Notes on the State of Virginia* – a text that serves as a frequent point of reference for respectful refutation throughout much of *De la littérature des Nègres*. But in a letter from later that year to the poet Joel Barlow, Jefferson proved unimpressed by the literary efforts documented in the study and asserted condescendingly that Grégoire’s “credulity has made him gather up every story he could find of men of color (without distinguishing whether black or of what degree of mixture) however slight the mention, or light the authority on which they are quoted.”²⁵ Jefferson’s parenthetical observation that Grégoire fails to note the racially mixed ancestry of some of his subjects is not strictly true, as he does make use of the distinguishing terminology “noir” and “mulâtre” throughout his history, noting in particular that “[t]here are more Negro than mulatto writers, and in general they have defended their African compatriots more zealously.”²⁶ Yet Grégoire shows no interest within the study in the sort of mathematical calculations of racial mixture that obsessed Jefferson, who contended in his *Notes* that the “improvement in the blacks in body and mind, in the first instance of their mixture with the whites, has been observed by everyone, and proves that their inferiority is not the effect merely of their condition of life.”²⁷ Jefferson’s belief in such racial improvement was nevertheless accompanied by an anxious desire to avoid a corollary “staining” of the blood issuing from the white participants in such unions, and to prevent all crossing of races in the event of emancipation by ensuring that freed slaves be “removed beyond the reach of mixture.”²⁸ Proffering a tongue-in-cheek reply to Jefferson, among others, on this subject, Grégoire himself demurs from making such pronouncements on the subject of interracial unions, “leav[ing] . . . to physiologists the task of bringing out the advantages of the mixing of races, with regard to the physical constitution as well as to the energizing of the moral faculties.” Noting simply that according to prevailing ideologies of race “[n]either Negroes nor mulattoes can ever augment the white caste, whilst the white caste daily augments the number of mulattoes,” Grégoire slyly predicts that the “inevitable result will be that in the end the mulattoes will become masters” (30).

If Jefferson's response to *De la littérature des Nègres* was predictably less than favorable, the antislavery author Lydia Maria Child drew heavily on Grégoire's work for her 1834 *Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans*. Borrowing largely from David Warden's 1810 English translation of *De la littérature des Nègres*, Child included Grégoire's sketches of "Africans" notable in both literary and political arenas, using these figures in much the same way that he had to argue against the racial hierarchies supporting the institution of slavery.²⁹ Foregrounding the collision of French colonial and Anglo-American racial ideologies, Child's text transforms an elite Saint-Dominguean member of the *gens de couleur* such as Ogé, for example, into "a heart-sick African" who "resolve[s] to maintain the rights of his oppressed companions."³⁰ In his performance in Child's text as a veritable abolitionist who "had long observed the operation of slavery, and [who] knew that patience, whatever it might do for the white man, brought upon the negro nothing but contempt and accumulated wrong," Ogé takes on an entirely different significance from the controversial figure who sought to ensure legal and social advantages for the *gens de couleur* while leaving the slave economy firmly intact.³¹ Child's deployment of the Saint-Dominguean revolutionary thus dissolves the colonial distinction between *mulâtre* and *noir* as irrelevant in an antebellum US culture whose binaristic vision of racial superiority oppressed both classes while also eliding the historical specificity of Ogé's actual exclusion of slaves from his revolt for civil rights. At the same time, Child's explicit call for an end to legislation prohibiting interracial marriages echoed but went far beyond Grégoire's more circumspect observation that "moralists and politicians" must be at odds in weighing "the consequences of a public opinion that considers it a dishonor to have a Negro woman as a legitimate wife, while as a concubine she is no disgrace" (30). Indeed, Child's argument that "the government ought not to be invested with power to control the affections any more than the consciences of citizens" – "A man has at least as good a right to choose a wife, as he has to choose a religion"; thus, "an unjust law exists in the Commonwealth [of Massachusetts], by which marriage between persons of different color is pronounced illegal"³² – ensured her immediate fall from the literary favor she had previously enjoyed as the *North American Review*'s designated "first woman in the republic" only a year before she published her *Appeal*.³³ In this sense, Grégoire's *De la littérature des Nègres* appears as an influential forebear in a literary genealogy of abolitionist texts effectively connecting Child's Anglo-American *Appeal* and the *Revue des Colonies* through a very different but nonetheless shared vision of a transformative American *métissage*, a productive cultural and racial crossing of

the New World arena that Bissette refers to as “the desirable fusion of the two races in the colonies,” “that we consider rightly as one of the greatest forms of progress that can be accomplished.”³⁴

Of course, as a work written with the hands of colonial censors in mind, Grégoire’s *De la littérature des Nègres* occluded a number of political registers that the *Revue* was dedicated precisely to making visible for a transatlantic readership. In drawing upon Grégoire’s work some thirty years later for the early American literary history documented in the pages of Bissette’s journal, it effectively restored a text produced under the censorship of an earlier governmental regime to its intended yet intentionally suppressed political context. Thus each literary figure from Grégoire’s study appears in the *Revue* surrounded by a series of disparate texts documenting the ongoing history of the colonies and the various institutions of slavery in the Americas. At the same time, while the *Revue* shares with *De la littérature des Nègres* a vision of international relations shaped in part by reading, its focus on the vulnerable place of the colonies just before and during the rise of US imperialism in the Americas proves diametrically opposed to Grégoire’s optimistic prediction that the “American continent, that sanctuary of liberty, is advancing toward a state of things that will be shared by the Antilles, a course of progress the combined powers will be unable to arrest.” For Grégoire, this progressive movement leading to the moment when “the Negroes are reinstated in their rights” is inseparable from the international hegemony of “an energetic and powerful nation, which in every way holds the promise of a great destiny, stretch[ing] her arms over the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and speed[ing] her ships from one ocean to the other by a shorter route, either by cutting the isthmus of Panama, or by building a canal of communication, as has been proposed” – a beneficently expansionist destiny that will end slavery as surely as it “will change the world of commerce and the shape of empires” (117). Contributing his own work to this course of progress, Grégoire concludes his text by noting in a postscriptum that his abolitionist study “will soon be published . . . in the United States of America” (118).

Yet even as he extols the virtues of an encroaching US presence in the wider Americas, Grégoire uses the final words of his text to envision the transmission of his study of the “literature of Negroes” through its imminent circulation within the very US literary culture that has erased the book’s central subject. For Grégoire, such erasures find their quintessential form, much to his apparent regret, in Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia*. While Grégoire cannot refute Jefferson’s writings without also “rendering homage to his heart,” he argues against the former US president’s notorious

attempt to establish white racial superiority through his dismissal of “the talent of two Negro writers,” Phillis Wheatley and Ignatius Sancho, both covered in Grégoire’s study. What is most fascinating about Grégoire’s refutation, however, is that he does not merely disagree with the aesthetic assessments of the “two Negro writers” in question; instead, he recasts one of Jefferson’s own arguments, from a very different context within the *Notes*, about literature produced in the United States. In this particular section of the *Notes*, Jefferson is responding to the contention of the Abbé Raynal, a French historian and philosopher, that (in Jefferson’s own paraphrase) “On doit être étonné (he says) que l’Amérique n’ait pas encore produit un bon poète . . . America has not yet produced one good poet.” Jefferson’s reply to this oft-quoted appraisal is to point out the relative youth of the new nation and to imply the probability of a future transformation in the national literature: “When we shall have existed as a people . . . should this reproach still be true, we will enquire from what unfriendly causes it has proceeded.”³⁵ Appropriating this line of argument for his own ends, Grégoire remarks, “In like manner we can say that once Negroes have lived in a state of civilization as long as the inhabitants of the United States, there will be some justification for believing that the Negroes are totally lacking in genius, if they have not produced men like Franklin . . . Jefferson . . . Barlow” (21).

This canny application of Jefferson’s defense of the future national literature to “la littérature des Nègres” only highlights the constitutive relation of the latter to the former, exposing the ways in which a mainstream early US literary tradition veritably defined itself either through, or in opposition to, what Jefferson called “every story . . . of men of color.” At the same time, in his implicit concession to Raynal’s estimation that “America has not yet produced one good poet,” Jefferson articulates the presentist bias at the heart of national US literary self-definition: its refusal of its own genealogical descent, its insistence upon the self-generating status of the contemporary literary generation. Jefferson’s notorious dismissal of “Negro writers” and his response to Raynal together adumbrate a sensibility of literary nationalism that would later shape Channing’s “Essay on American Language and Literature” as well as those writings that followed it in spirit throughout the first half of the nineteenth century – a sensibility predicated on the repudiation of the literary past as well as on the erasure of the African presence within it, both historically and literarily. “Religion indeed has produced a Phillis Whately [*sic*],” Jefferson concedes, “[b]ut it could not produce a poet.”³⁶ Unlike Jefferson, Channing, and other Anglo-American writers and critics who succeeded them – including Bryant and Emerson, to name but two – the *Revue des Colonies* made no attempt to

clear space for a putatively originary, Adamic, national literary endeavor. Drawing upon Grégoire's study, the journal sought instead to recover and document a fully hemispheric American literary history, and to establish a specific usable past of literature by writers of African descent, from which it might draw for the contemporary political work it performed.

THE FRENCH CARIBBEANIZATION OF PHILLIS WHEATLEY:
A POETICS OF ANTICOLONIALISM

The *Revue's* documentation of an early comparative American literature begins in the second year of its publication, when the issues after July 1835 begin to include articles on eighteenth-century writers of African descent interspersed with original literary contributions from the nineteenth-century Americas, as well as book reviews and literary criticism related to slavery and the colonies. Easily the most compelling article among those covering the earlier literary figures is the one devoted to the very poet Jefferson had dismissed in his *Notes*. Often credited with the founding of the African American literary tradition, Phillis Wheatley was the first African American author to write a published book, the first major African American poet, and the first to achieve an international reputation.³⁷ While a number of notices about "a very Extraordinary female Slave" along with examples of her poems appeared in the late eighteenth-century United States, particularly after the 1773 London publication of her volume *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*, the burgeoning self-consciousness that characterized the mainstream early and mid-nineteenth-century national literary culture could not compass the existence of a female poet of color such as Wheatley. Thus even after William Lloyd Garrison's weekly *Liberator* had run almost all of Wheatley's collected poems during 1832 – and after the Boston-based abolitionist "Friends of the Africans" society sponsored the publication of an 1834 edition of her poetry, edited by George W. Light in an attempt to show that "had Phillis fallen into less generous and affectionate hands, she would speedily have perished under the privations and exertions of common servitude" – Wheatley's work garnered little attention in mainstream US publications.³⁸ An 1834 issue of *North American Review* mentions Light's edition in passing, and a half-page article from *The New-England Magazine* during the same year prints a single poem and includes a few sentences about Wheatley's life, apparently to sensationalize the combination of her literacy and her racial status: "the poems of an African slave!"³⁹ By 1862 the *Atlantic Monthly* treats Wheatley

briefly in an article on Jefferson and slavery – but only in order to affirm the former president's racially based valuations of her work.⁴⁰

Yet as early as 1837, a lengthy entry on Wheatley appeared in the Paris-based *Revue*: a political and literary publication about not the United States but the New World colonies, a journal published outside the country in which Wheatley wrote and not even in the poet's own language. Of course, Bisette's interest in Wheatley's poetry along with the other early "*littérature des Nègres*" covered in the journal was in part the same as that of his source in Grégoire: to show that people of African descent were capable of producing literature and thus, according to an Enlightenment equation of literacy with humanity, worthy of both freedom and civil rights. Yet as the *Revue*'s editor and main commentator, Bisette appears to have been motivated beyond this obvious objective (arguably already achieved in the very existence of his own journal) by a belief in the inextricability and mutually clarifying capacities of literary history and politics. In the January issue of 1837, Grégoire's biography of Wheatley as well as three of her poems are printed among the issue's wider coverage of a number of political and historical events – each of which, I want to suggest, implicitly instructs us how to read Wheatley's work, even as the poems themselves both argue for and exemplify points within the issue's nonliterary articles.

The issue opens with a short account of Ogé and his fight on behalf of the class of *gens de couleur* before the Haitian Revolution. Presumably written by Bisette himself, the article documents Ogé's appearance before the French National Assembly to demand civil and political rights for the Saint-Dominguean *gens de couleur* in 1789, right around the time of the first printing of Wheatley's poems across the Atlantic. The limited parameters of Ogé's activism – and his failure to demand equivalent rights for the other oppressed classes – bespoke more generally the deep rift between *gens de couleur* and *noirs* that emerged with the onset of French colonialism and still troubled the entire West Indies in Bisette's own moment. Addressing himself directly to this problem, Bisette attempts in the Wheatley issue of the *Revue* to negotiate semantically across this racial divide in search of new political unity. "The men of color, it is true, spoke for themselves only in their petition," concedes Bisette of Ogé's 1789 movement:

But in their minds, blacks could not be excluded from the concessions they demanded. The generic expression, *men of color*, which they used when formulating their demands, did not suffice in the minds of the whites to designate all those who do not belong to the white caste in the colonies; the expression was thus interpreted by the colonists in the sense that most suited their odious

Machiavellianism . . . and, a few days afterwards . . . putting on airs of patrons and protectors, the white colonists addressed the Assembly . . . in the name of the blacks . . .

(Mais dans leur pensée, les noirs ne pouvaient pas être exclus des concessions qu'ils réclamaient. L'expression générique, *hommes de couleur*, dont ils se servirent en formulant leur réclamation, ne suffit pas dans l'esprit des blancs pour désigner tous ceux qui ne font pas partie de la caste blanche aux colonies; cette expression fut donc interprétée par les colons dans le sens qui convenait à leur odieux machiavélisme . . . et, peu de jours après, . . . se donnant des airs de patronage et de protecteurs, les colons blancs adressèrent à l'assemblée . . . au nom des noirs . . .) (277)

Bissette thus distinguishes between the colonial meaning of the term "men of color" and a meaning that would embrace any person of African descent in a common cause against white oppression. Rejecting the former identification with the exclusionary category of *gens de couleur* upon which his journal had been founded, Bissette now broadens its definition and simultaneously traces its more common nineteenth-century meaning to a politically motivated act of interpretation on the part of the white Creoles, who wanted nothing more than "to divide in order to rule" (277).

To reveal their conspiratorial hypocrisy, Bissette cites from two contradictory Creole documents: first, from a 1791 text designed by the white colonists ostensibly to redress the exclusion of *nègres libres* (a relatively small group of free members of the *noir* class, which was usually, but not always, made up of slaves) from the political demands formulated by the *gens de couleur*; and then from an 1832 letter by a white colonist to a group of Martiniquan *gens de couleur* begging them not to support emancipation of the slaves in the French colonies. Though the two issues – the question of equality between *gens de couleur* and *nègres libres* and the question of abolition – are in no way parallel, Bissette adeptly illustrates the ways in which the racial ideologies of the Creoles were adapted to shifting political exigencies. "The negro is born of pure blood; the mulatto is by contrast the issue of mixed blood . . . a bastardized species," contends the first Creole document (277); the second, written after the class of *gens de couleur* had gained new political rights under French colonial law, praises "the constant and courageous efforts [that] brought [their] legal triumph," and purports to offer "with joy the hand of brotherhood" to the "so-called class of color" in a gesture towards the very racial "fusion" earlier denounced by the Creole establishment but now "supported by reason and philosophy" (279).

Bissette's obvious contempt for this offer of "harmony between the whites and the men of color" – at the expense of emancipation for the colonies'

slaves – marks a powerful transformation from his earlier eagerness in the initial issues of the *Revue* to endorse “the civil, political, and social rights of the two free classes.”⁴¹ This transformation is particularly clarified by Wheatley’s presence in the issue. Both *noir* and enslaved, Wheatley supplements the political point of view and cultural agenda of a journal associated with and founded by *gens de couleur*, her voice making a specifically female and poetic contribution to the question of emancipation debated by the male politicians and historical figures covered in the same issue. At the same time, Wheatley’s status as a colonial poet, writing on the eve of the revolution that produced the United States, lends itself to the journal’s more subtle expression of a shift in its stance toward the question of colonialism. Included in the issue is Wheatley’s famous poem to the Earl of Dartmouth, notable in part for the powerful parallel it draws between colonial tyranny and slavery while celebrating the appointment of a secretary to the North American colonies perceived to be sympathetic to the colonists’ position. In the original English-language version, the stanza initially addressing this parallel reads as follows:

No more, *America*, in mournful strain
Of wrongs, and grievance unredress’d complain,
No longer shalt thou dread the iron chain,
Which wanton *Tyranny* with lawless hand
Has made, and with it meant t’enslave the land⁴²

Grégoire’s 1808 translation of these lines into French moderates the language of slavery within this stanza, rendering the poet’s apostrophe to “Amérique” as a far more vague promise that “these wrongs will finally be amended; these outrages will be expiated” (“ils seront enfin réparés ces torts, ils seront expiés ces outrages”): “Fear no more the chains forged by the hand of insolent tyranny, which promised to reduce this country to slavery” (“Ne redoute plus les chaînes forgées par la main de l’insolente tyrannie, qui se promettait d’asservir cette contrée”).⁴³ While Grégoire’s translation of this stanza may reflect what was at that time his procolonial position (the hand of tyranny is now merely “insolent” rather than “lawless”), the image of the shackles recalls and reinforces the antislavery metaphor from the original text, as does his translation of the poet’s oblique reference to her African identity in the next lines:

When reading these lines, My lord, you will ask in surprise from whence comes this love of liberty? From what source did I draw this passion for the general good, the exclusive prerogative of sensitive souls?

Alas! In the springtime of my life a cruel destiny uprooted me from the fortunate place of my birth. What sorrows, what anguish tortured the authors of my days!

(En lisant ces vers, Milord, vous demanderez avec surprise d'où vient cet amour de la liberté? A quelle source j'ai puisé cette passion du bien général, apanage exclusif des âmes sensibles?

Hélas! Au printemps de ma vie un destin cruel m'arracha des lieux fortunés qui m'avoient vu naître. Quelles douleurs, quelles angoisses auront torturé les auteurs de mes jours!) (271)

Yet if Grégoire's translation subtly dilutes the central metaphor of colonial enslavement in Wheatley's original, Bissette effectively restores it through the juxtaposition of the translation with his own commentary on the history of the revolution in Saint-Domingue. "The whites who wanted nothing more than to divide the blacks from the men of color were victims of their own project," he asserts: "They disappeared from Saint-Domingue with slavery . . . While Haiti became free, the French colonies remained slaves" (278). This audacious equation of French imperial rule with the practice of African slavery is a far cry from the Bissette who launched the journal by declaring the French metropole to be "too dear, her services too precious, and her protection too necessary to let us go near ideas hostile to her," insisting that "[w]e, the children of France, have no desire that a Bolivar come and deliver us from a foreign yoke."⁴⁴ By the next article from the Wheatley issue, in fact, there is ample evidence to indicate that the possible shift in Bissette's position on colonialism had not gone unnoticed by his contemporaries. This article cites from a letter to the French Chamber of Deputies signed by a group of Martiniquan *gens de couleur* who opposed Bissette and his fellow editor Louis Fabien in their advocacy of emancipation. These *gens de couleur*, attests the official document, "while paying all due respect to the generous sentiments that, with their noble ardour, fill the truly French hearts of their honorable delegates, Messieurs Fabien and Bissette, are nevertheless obliged to protest loudly against the demand for general emancipation of the slaves that could have been inspired only by an exaggerated zeal for the cause of humanity or perhaps the suggestions of an *anti-colonial faction*" (282).

Bissette makes no comment about this last and more potentially dangerous intimation. His tactic instead, as in many issues of the *Revue*, is to juxtapose such fragments of colonial discourse with seemingly unrelated texts, which inevitably reshape the specific implications of the adjoining documents. Noting simply that the protestation was eventually retracted by this group of *gens de couleur*, he moves on immediately to print the text of an official Martiniquan colonial circulation suggesting contributions

of specific amounts to be paid on a voluntary basis for the purchase and sale of sugar, coffee, cocoa, and – last on the list but inextricable from the production of the former items – slaves. Alongside the two-page text of the circulation, Bisette observes merely that such “voluntary contributions [provide] the greatest funds possible to the delegates in Paris, to be devoted to the defense of what they call *colonial propriety*, which is in fact slavery.” The effect of the entire series of articles preceding the section on Wheatley is thus to unmask the elevated phraseology of colonial language, revealing the coarse underside of its institutional realities.⁴⁵

In the second half of the Wheatley issue, Bisette turns more overtly to this discursive material as his object of political scrutiny and outright scornful critique. In a fascinating segment titled “Colonial Portfolio: unedited fragments,” Bisette offers for his readers’ perusal an ostensibly random group of short texts, “emanating in large part from the magistrates and administrative functionaries of the colonies,” taken from a large number of pieces on the same subject – “of which we possess the collection.” From the sampling drawn of this strange collection, readers are to judge for themselves that “in stupidity and political heresy, our Guadeloupean functionaries concede nothing to those of Martinique and vice versa.” The first item in the portfolio is a letter from the Guadeloupean director of the interior, one M. Jourand, to the Point-à-Pitre police, returning to them the identificatory permit they had earlier issued to a free woman of color. “I have taken it from [her] hands,” announces the letter formally, “and I have the honor of returning [it] to you.” Jourand has viewed the permit of this apprehended woman, he writes, with “as much surprise as dismay”: “it has omitted to specify her condition or her color,” and someone has wrongly attributed to this person the “quality” of a mademoiselle. The particular moment when the *gens de couleur* are raising “insolent and misplaced pretensions” is not, the director reprimands, the time “to depart from the ordinances that vigorously proscribe their status.” The mistake was no doubt made by one of the police guards, opines Jourand in a tone heavy with implication, for these agents “have unfortunately too much familiarity with the *gens de couleur*, of whom this woman is a pernicious example; on this front, they must be watched.”

Bisette’s brief commentary on this text bitingly reverses the direction of the racial scrutiny undertaken by the letter. “A *white* colonist could not have said it better,” he begins, with added emphasis on his racial designation: “M. Jourand needed to toss this token of his sincerity to the colonial aristocracy to make them forget his origin. For it is public knowledge that M. Jourand is nothing else himself but a mulatto from Saint-Domingue,

or, as we say today, *a man belonging to the former class of color*.” In one stroke, Bissette deftly illustrates the problem taken up in the earlier article on the *gens de couleur* and *nègres libres* of Saint-Domingue, the ambiguous and contradictory effects of colonial hierarchies of color, which are designed precisely “to divide in order to rule.” Bissette thus concludes, almost non-sensically, “In the letter, M. Jourand abuses mulattoes. M. Jourand is not a mulatto, he is quadroon, or better, *he belongs to the former class of color*” (294). Sliding rapidly among various racial designations for Jourand, Bissette mocks the ever evolving colonial language of race, raising doubts about the stability of colonial whiteness itself, indistinguishable from that particular “class of color” that is now called “former.” At the same time, in its stark representation of a female figure under colonial surveillance, reduced by contradictory racial ideologies to her “color” and “condition,” Jourand’s letter evokes a Caribbean double for Wheatley herself, reminding the journal’s readership that her own writing career was unceasingly subject to the official surveillance of “respectable persons,” and that the “quality” of poet assigned by their documentation of her work was also disputed and retracted – in her case, by a dignitary no less than Jefferson, who guarded the racialized borders of the poetic realm with as much anxious scrupulosity as Jourand in the realm of civil rights.

Another item appearing in Bissette’s “Colonial Portfolio” is a bill of human sale: signed by one Monsieur Fleury of Saint Pierre, Martinique, the document attests to payment of 594 francs “for the total amount of a new negro, marked on the left arm with a fire-brand, that I have sold and delivered to [M. Cordier], issued from the cargo of my vessel” (“pour le montant d’un nègre nouveau, marqué au bras gauche de l’étampe à feu, que je lui ai vendu et livré, provenant de la cargaison de mon navire”) (297). Tacitly reminding readers of the *Revue* that the international slave trade continues despite its illegality since 1815, the bill of sale also adds a concrete image involving the very body of the sold slave to Wheatley’s more circumspect description of her own enslavement in her poem to the Earl of Dartmouth: “I, young in life, by seeming cruel fate was snatch’d from Afric’s fancy’d happy seat” or, as Grégoire translates these lines – notably eliminating the terms “seeming” and “fancy’d” – “a cruel destiny uprooted me from the fortunate place of my birth.” As with other items in the Portfolio, Bissette approaches the text of the bill of sale with close attention to the contradictions and ambiguities of its language. “Here is a Monsieur Fleury who writes in a style that is indeed *fleuri*,” or floral, he writes; punning on the slavetrader’s name, Bissette ridicules the ornate quality of the bill’s colonial language for the tension it creates with its vulgar

content, its quantification of “the total amount” of the “negro” whom Fleury deems “new,” or freshly issued from the cargo of his ship. Throughout the remainder of the issue, in articles ranging from a scathing review of the mulattophobic novel *Outre-mer* by the Martiniquan Creole writer Louis de Maynard to a refutation of the Guadeloupean antiabolitionist tract *On Emancipation of the Slaves in the French Colonies* by André de Lacharrière, Bissette devotes himself to close readings of further specimens of colonial discourse, exposing the ways in which it collapses upon its own premises into flawed logic and self-contradictions.

The numerous legal, commercial, and political documents addressing slavery in this issue of the *Revue* illuminate the place of Wheatley in its pages, bringing new urgency in particular to the printed excerpt from Grégoire’s short biography of the poet, which carefully notes that she had been not “brought from Africa to America” – as the famous letter from her master, John Wheatley, to the publisher of her *Poems on Various Subjects* had attested – but was instead “volée en Afrique,” stolen, in other words, from her homeland. While *Poems on Various Subjects* opens with the publisher’s “Letter to the Publick” testifying to the examination Wheatley underwent before “the most respectable characters in Boston” lest anyone “suspect they were not really the writings of Phillis,” “an uncultivated Barbarian from Africa,” the biography in the *Revue* explicitly identifies such suspicions as a “pretext to malevolence,” exposing the Enlightenment repudiation of African and African American literary production as the philosophical foundation of slavery. At the same time, while Grégoire’s biography echoes the apologetic preface to the original edition of her poems in requesting readers’ indulgence in judging her work, it also reminds the readership that she wrote at the age of nineteen, that her poems were “the productions of a slave,” and, perhaps most crucially, that the translation offered is possibly “a bad copy of a good original” (“une mauvaise copie d’un bon original”).

That Grégoire was generously aware of the problems inherent in translation must have seemed somewhat ironic to Bissette, who reveals an entirely different attitude toward the translating process in his own extraordinary rewriting of the first poem printed in the journal from Grégoire’s collection, Wheatley’s “On the death of JC, an infant.” The journal’s version incorporates a few lines from Grégoire’s essentially faithful rendering of the poem into French but translates most of the poem into an entirely different text from both Wheatley’s original and the translation in Grégoire’s *De la littérature des Nègres*. Indeed, Bissette risks fundamental departures from the literal sense of the original in order to create his own interpretation

of its wider political possibilities; it is more accurately a mistranslation, a thematic refashioning that supplements in Wheatley's poetry what Grégoire himself cites as an absence in her texts of rumination upon "the misfortunes of her [enslaved] compatriots."

Wheatley's "On the death of JC, an infant," as its title makes clear, marks the death of a local New England child known by name to the poet as James. Like many of the other works appearing in *Poems on Various Subjects*, the poem is an elegy addressed to specific Boston readers, in this case James C's grieving parents:

No more the flow'ry scenes of pleasure rise,
Nor charming prospects greet the mental eyes,
No more with joy we view that lovely face
Smiling, disportive, flush'd with ev'ry grace.

The tear of sorrow flown from ev'ry eye,
Groans answer groans, and sighs to sighs reply
What sudden pangs shot thro' each aching heart,
When, *Death*, thy messenger dispatch's his dart!
Thy dread attendants, all destroying Pow'r,
Hurried the infant to his mortal hour.
Could'st thou unpitying close those radiant eyes?
Or fail'd his artless beauties to surprise?
Could not his innocence thy stroke control,
Thy purpose shake and soften all thy soul?
The blooming babe, with shades of *Death* o'erspread,
No more shall smile, no more shall raise its head;
But like a branch that from the tree is torn,
Falls prostrate, wither'd, languid, and forlorn.
"Where flies my *James*?" tis thus I seem to hear
The parent ask, "Some angel tell me where
He wings his passage thro' the yielding air?"
Methinks a cherub bending from the skies
Observes the question and serene replies,
"In heav'n's high palaces your babe appears:
Prepare to meet him and dismiss your tears."
Shall not th' intelligence your griefs restrain,
And turn the mournful to the cheerful strain?
Cease your complaints, suspend each rising sigh,
Cease to accuse the Ruler of the sky.
Parents, no more indulge the falling tear:
Let *Faith* to heav'n's refulgent domes repair,
There see your infant like a seraph glow:
What charms celestial in his numbers flow.
Melodious, while the soul-enchancing strain
Dwells on his tongue, and fills th' ethereal plain?

Enough – forever cease your murm'ring breath;
 Not as a foe, but friend, converse with *Death*,
 Since to the port of happiness unknown
 He brought that treasure which you call your own.
 The gift of heav'n entrusted to your hand
 Cheerful resign at the divine command;
 Not at your bar must sov'reign *Wisdom* stand.⁴⁶

Adopting a rhetorical stance common to Wheatley's other writings on the deaths of loved ones, the poem describes the departed infant, "that lovely face/Smiling, disportive, flush'd with ev'ry grace," and the universal sorrow inspired by his death ("The tear of sorrow flown from ev'ry eye"), before proceeding to imagine the more specific scene of the bereft parents: Wheatley's speaker ventures, "'Where flies my *James*?' tis thus I seem to hear/The parent ask, 'Some angel tell me where/He wings his passage thro' the yielding air?'" The parent's question is immediately answered by "a cherub bending from the skies [who]/Observes the question and serene replies,/'In heav'n's high palaces your babe appears:/Prepare to meet him and dismiss your tears.'" The remainder of the poem engages in a standard Christian argument about the triumph of the celestial world over the sorrowful earthly one, urging that the "Parents, no more indulge the falling tear:/Let *Faith* to heav'n's refulgent domes repair./There see your infant like a seraph glow."

In the *Revue*, however, even the title of the purported translation of "On the death of JC, an infant" immediately reveals its deviation both from Wheatley's English-language original and Grégoire's French translation, which omits the titular initials, rendering the poem's title as "Sur la mort d'un enfant" ("On the death of a child"). The *Revue*'s version of Wheatley's poem is titled "Sur la mort d'un enfant *noir*" – "On the death of a *black* child" – and its addressees are no longer the presumably white parents of JC, only a few among the many prominent Bostonians for whom Wheatley composed poems while still a slave.

I.

Le plaisir couronné de fleurs ne vient plus embellir nos moments.

II.

L'espérance n'ouvre plus l'avenir pour nous caresser par des illusions enchanteresses

III.

Puisque la joie et le bonheur nous ont quittés, que la poésie descende des cieux.

IV.

La poésie, douce et tendre mère, qui berce sur ses genoux ceux qui souffrent.

V.

La poésie qui pose ses lèvres sur les yeux gonflés et douloureux de ceux qui souffrent.

VI.

La poésie qui rafraîchit, du vent de ses ailes, le front brûlant des malheureux.

VII.

Que la poésie vienne! Car nous ne verrons plus ce visage enfantin, noir comme l'ébène, gracieux comme les feuilles de cocotier.

VIII.

Que la poésie vienne! Car de tous les yeux s'échappent des larmes. Les gémissements sont l'écho des gémissements; les sanglots répondent aux sanglots.

IX.

Quoi! Sans être émue, la mort a posé sa main froide sur l'adorable enfant.

X.

Elle a éteint la vie sur son visage qui s'est terni comme se ternit un brin d'herbe lorsque disparaît, sous une nuée, le rayon du soleil qui le dorait.

XI.

Où s'est enfui mon bien-aimé James? s'écrie le père. Quand son ame voltige dans les airs, anges conducteurs, indiquez-moi le chemin de son passage.

XII.

La mère, elle, tristement assise sur ses talons, les bras pendants, la tête penchée sur la poitrine, ne dit rien (288–89).⁴⁷

(Pleasure crowned with flowers no longer adorns our moments.
Hope no longer opens the future to caress us with enchanting illusions.
Since joy and happiness have left us, let poetry descend from the heavens.
Poetry, sweet and tender mother, who rocks upon her knees those who suffer.
Poetry who puts her lips upon the swollen and grieving eyes of those who suffer.

Poetry who refreshes, with the wind of her wings, the burning brow of the wretched.

Let poetry come! For we will no longer see this childish face, black like ebony, graceful like the leaves of the coconut palm.

Let poetry come! For from all eyes tears escape. Moans are the echo of moans; sobs respond to sobs.

What! Completely unmoved, death has put her cold hand on the adorable child.

She has extinguished the life upon his face which became tarnished as a blade of grass becomes tarnished when, under a cloud, the ray of the sun that gilded it disappears.

Where has my beloved James fled? cries the father. When his soul flutters in the air, angel guides, show me the path it is taking.

The mother, for her part, sitting sadly upon her heels, arms hanging, head leaned on her chest, says nothing.)

The *Revue's* rendering of Wheatley's poem ritually invokes "La poésie," personified as a "sweet and tender" mother, called upon in the poem to

minister not only to the dead child's parents but more generally to "ceux qui souffrent," "les malheureux" – those who suffer, the wretched – a group given no specific name in the text but whose potential racial and political identities are nevertheless made clear by the poem's (mis)translated title and the wider subjects covered in the journal.

While the argument of Wheatley's original text depends on what some critics have envisioned as a poetics of liberation crystallizing around depictions of the celestial world, the *Revue's* "On the death of a black child" remains steadfastly focused on this world, where poetry is summoned from the heavens to aid the suffering rather than vice versa. As in Wheatley's original poem, the parent (this time specifically a father) asks where his beloved James has flown and calls on the angels to reveal the passage of his son's soul through the air. But while Wheatley's parent receives the unambiguous answer of a cherub, the father in the *Revue's* version goes without a response from either the poet or the heavens. The *Revue's* translation refuses the reassuring closure of Wheatley's original, instead ending abruptly on a tableau of the child's mother and the bodily manifestation of her grief: "sitting sadly upon her heels, arms hanging, head leaned on her chest, [she] says nothing." The mother's silence seems almost to rebuke the confident celestial discourse articulated by Wheatley's cherub, suggesting that the *Revue's* translation is not just a reinterpretation of Wheatley but a pointed response to the perceived inadequacy of her faith in the world beyond in lieu of explicit racial and political consciousness. Indeed, the image of the grieving mother, entirely absent from Wheatley's original, recalls the carnage documented in the article with which the January 1837 issue opens, a final installment in a series of stories on what was called "l'affaire de la Grand'Anse" – "one of the sinister events of which the history of the colonies offers more than one example." The Grand'Anse affair ensued when the French government denounced the political demonstration of a group of *gens de couleur* in a number of public writings as an "insurrection," a term that eventually became de facto evidence in a series of death penalty convictions as well as the catalyst for a powerful surge of white Creole mob violence involving vigilante killings. "How many mothers cried for their children! How many families ruined, dispersed, annihilated!" explodes the opening of the report, demanding that readers envision the human costs of the affair as reported to them from the safety of a Paris-based journal – as well as the more general human costs invisible within the safety of Wheatley's poetic orientation.⁴⁸

The *Revue's* critique of Wheatley is registered simply but powerfully in the transformation of the titular James C into the more representative

“enfant noir,” the black child mourned by a questioning father and a silent mother. If these parents receive none of Wheatley’s original reassurances about the power of faith, the *Revue*’s translation demands that poetry come to commemorate the precious racial and cultural specificity of their child’s face: the color of his skin, “noir comme l’ébène”; and his beauty, “gracieux comme les feuilles de cocotier.” The figuration of the child’s grace as a tropical plant widens the scope of the translation beyond the northern parameters of Wheatley’s original, gesturing toward the Caribbean origin of the *Revue*’s main contributors as well as a distinctly transnational conception of the meaning of a black child’s death in the history of the colonies covered by the journal. At the same time, the simile deployed to represent the child’s blackness (“like ebony”) in these lines contrasts sharply with Wheatley’s own famous racial simile from her poem “On being brought from Africa”: “Remember, Christians, Negroes, black as Cain,/May be refin’d and join the angelic train.” Though Grégoire did not include this particular poem in his work on Wheatley, the first English translation of *De la littérature des Nègres* in the United States, published by David Warden in 1810, effectively altered Grégoire’s anthology by conspicuously including these memorable lines as an epigraph to the section on Wheatley – a couplet reiterating the racist Christian theory that Africans descended from Cain, marked by a dark color and forever enslaved to pay for the ancestral sin of Abel’s murder. While Wheatley’s attitude toward the theory of racial difference that she cites is highly ambiguous, the *Revue* provided an explicit fictional commentary on the theory articulated in an early Guadeloupean short story that also appears in the journal’s pages. The story depicts a young slave named Zélie who goes to Mass and learns the supposed cause of her servitude from the story of Abel and Cain, as interpreted by the priest; the story caustically explains that Caribbean slaveowners “trace back almost to the birth of the world the line that separates them” from their slaves, “dar[ing] to alter what they believe to be the divine word.”⁴⁹

The *Revue des Colonies* thus incorporates a version of Wheatley that revises and invents within its documentation of the literary past, imagines what could have been, allowing Bisette to produce for his reading public a politicized relation between Wheatley’s poetry and other early writers of the Americas with whom the poet had never otherwise been anthologized or associated. Other examples of the journal’s revisionist recovery of an early comparative American literary history include its treatment of such figures as Ignatius Sancho, born on a slave ship en route to the Americas though his literary works were written and published in England; Olaudah Equiano, author of the first self-written account of slavery in the African American

tradition, an autobiography that became the prototype for nineteenth-century African American slave narratives; and Francis Williams, an early Jamaican poet and Latinist whose work was originally published in Edward Long's proslavery *History of Jamaica* in an attempt to discredit the possibility of veritable literary production by a person of African origin.⁵⁰ The *Revue's* appropriation of Long's racist diatribe for its preservation rather than its denigration of an early Afro-Jamaican poem exemplifies the journal's ability to excavate the components of a literary tradition out of a text that sought precisely to deny its existence, as well as the editor's refusal to allow the erasures of early African American literary production committed in contemporaneous discourses of US literary history – exemplified in Grégoire's *De la littérature des Nègres* by Jefferson himself – to go unchallenged.

“LESS FRENCH THAN THE AMERICAN IS ENGLISH”:
LITERARY FUSION IN THE FRENCH CARIBBEAN

If the *Revue* redressed the historical denigration of a body of literature that Jefferson had called “beneath the dignity of criticism,” offering a politicized inscription of an early African diasporic literary history in the Americas, it also brought together a far broader collection of nineteenth-century American literatures, comprised of francophone contributions by *gens de couleur*, as well as a number of white Creole writers, from Guadeloupe, Cayenne, Martinique, and Haiti, most of whom appear as only minor footnotes or not at all within current literary histories of the Caribbean.⁵¹ This nineteenth-century collection features such authors as the Guadeloupe-born historian and literary critic Joseph Saint-Rémy, who contributed to the *Revue* his study of the early Haitian poet Antoine Dupré, a soldier who had served in the revolution and whose “Hymne à la liberté” addressed Haiti as the “cherished mother” who must never again be assaulted by “our tyrants”;⁵² the Haitian writer Beauvais Lespinasse, whose submissions included literary accounts of various episodes from the Haitian Revolution, driven by minor characters and long fictional dialogues; and the Martiniquan poet (as well as future mayor and representative to the French Constituent Assembly) Pierre Marie Pory-Papy, who contributed a poem entitled “Adieux,” which marks his return from France to his native land after his studies as well as his farewell to a fellow poet addressed as “Emile R.”

“Adieux” is particularly interesting for the ambivalent stance it registers toward the poet's metropolitan education and his colonial home. On the one hand, the poet celebrates the natural qualities of Martinique and

purports to wonder “how come/men, amid so many native beauties,/ Smothering in their blood these primitive virtues/trade them for exile?” (“pour quoi donc faut-il/Que les hommes, parmi tant de beautés natives,/Etouffant dans leur sein les vertus primitives/En fassent un séjour d’exil?”). The next stanza, however, avows that “laws and customs, correcting themselves ceaselessly,/Will hasten the progress that is stopped by the laziness/And all the evils that this infant-people is still enduring” (“les lois et les mœurs se corrigeant sans cesse,/Hâteront les progrès qu’arrêtent la paresse/Et tous les maux qu’endure encore ce peuple-enfant”): “It’s up to beautiful France to cover with her wing/These distant scions that her wise tutelage will improve as they grow up” (“C’est à la belle France à couvrir de son aile/Ces lointains rejetons qu’une sage tutelle/Rendra meilleur en grandissant”). But if the poem defers overtly to the metropolitan center from which it was produced, it also gestures toward the more itinerant milieu of the journal in which it appears when it reminds its addressee Emile R. of the “sweet memories of our mutual embrace,/Where poetry, history, politics, and law/Seized us both, and filled the hours/In the sun and in the open air . . .” (“souvenirs si doux de mutuelle étreinte,/Où poésie, histoire et politique et droit/Nous saisissaient tous deux et remplissaient les heures/Au soleil, en plein air . . .”). The poem’s double signification in “droit” of law and right, as well as its articulation of the weave of literature within the past and its political unfolding, evoke the mission of the *Revue* itself; the issue featuring Pory-Papy’s “Adieux” and its ostensible celebration of French parental dominion over the “infant” Martinique is largely devoted to scathing criticism of the French government’s evolving positions on slavery in the colonies.⁵³

Such writings provide an unprecedented anthology of early French West Indian fiction and poetry embracing both colonial and postcolonial political sites and anticipating much later collective artistic and political initiatives such as the Caribbean Arts Movement founded in the 1960s. At the same time, the journal’s literary anthology invites comparison with various repeating tropes and themes suffusing contemporaneous US literary production. The novella *Zélie*, for example, printed serially in 1835 (and presented quasi-anonymously as the work of “a woman who continues to live in Guadeloupe,” most likely a white Creole author), introduces both the enduring trope of the exoticized, mixed-race beauty, the titular *Zélie*, and the equally familiar figure of a dark and brooding male intellectual who reveals his mixed ancestry at a crucial moment near the end of the narrative.⁵⁴ Set in early nineteenth-century Guadeloupe amid frantic white Creole fears of unchecked racial mixture as well as “les

horreurs de Saint-Domingue,” both these characters evoke counterparts in a nineteenth-century US literary culture known for the trope of the so-called “tragic mulatto.”⁵⁵ But while the tragic mulatto and mulatta figures of early nineteenth-century US literature were doomed, as Sterling Brown would observe, to inevitable tragedy, most often a violent and untimely death, these early mixed-race Caribbean figures preside over the melodramatic demise of the novella’s central white protagonist, Charles, who dies feverishly in the final paragraphs.⁵⁶

Among the most intriguing literary figures to appear in the *Revue* is the Haitian poet Ignace Nau, a member of the Haitian *cénacle* of the 1830s, an early literary nationalist group that had attempted to launch two newspapers in 1836 and 1837, *Le Républicain* and *L’Union*, both of which were suppressed within a few years. Bissette’s *Revue* offered an outlet for Haitian writing during this tumultuous decade, though the distinctly Romantic poems that Nau submitted there – such as “Pensées du soir” and “La Mouche-à-Feu” – were largely death-obsessed, melancholy, and overtly apolitical. As with Wheatley and the other writers anthologized in the journal, however, Bissette imbued Nau’s poetry with quite different valences through the material with which he chose to print it, situating it alongside continuing news of the arrests of dissidents throughout the Caribbean. Nau’s brother, Émile Nau, had been a kind of literary dissident in Haiti, one of the main founders of the *cénacle* as well as its suppressed periodicals, a leader of the group that saw itself as a lone “handful of bold and adventurous soldiers,” battling against what it understood as the Haitian government’s official mistrust of intellectual activity and its economic overdependence on Europe.⁵⁷ Émile Nau’s solution to the problems of emergent Haitian nationality was to promote the founding of an indigenous Haitian literature, one firmly rooted in the African-European mixture that had produced Haiti and thus resistant to the imitation of more established European literary forms.⁵⁸ With this goal in mind, he looked explicitly to the United States as both model and antimodel: “We are quite like the American, transplanted and stripped of traditions,” he observed. “But there is in the fusion of the European and African cultures which constitutes our national character, something that makes us less French than the American is English. This advantage is a real one.”⁵⁹ For Nau, Haitian national culture would develop differently from that of the US because of an African difference that allowed for productive “fusion,” for a cultural *métissage* that remained impossible in the still slaveholding realm of racial binarism to the north. This was, as Nau’s *cénacle* understood it, a cultural and national advantage, as well as a specifically literary one.

In the pages of the *Revue*, Ignace Nau would respond to his brother's call for Haitian literary indigenism with his story "Isalina," a landmark in early comparative American literary history as the first known work of prose fiction in the Haitian literary tradition.⁶⁰ Published in the August 1836 issue, "Isalina" is set in a Haitian mill-town, where it explores scenes of daily life among the villagers and their participation in Vodoun, the African-European syncretic system of belief that the story terms "sorcery." The tale involves a classic love triangle comprised of two male friends, the protagonist Paul and his "baptism-brother," Jean-Julien, who become rivals for the love of the same woman, Isalina. Isalina loves Paul, but when Jean-Julien corners her alone in a graveyard and attempts to assault her, pushing her until she falls and smashes her head against a stone, she sustains an injury that proves nearly fatal – and so powerful that it alters her feelings about Paul and sends her into a temporary delirium. This plot unfolds around a web of kinship that Jean-Julien's violent actions have disrupted: Isalina is originally betrothed to Paul through her father's deathbed wish for their union; Paul is bound to Jean-Julien as a brother through their shared baptism. It is thus fitting that when Jean-Julien breaks his bond as a brother to Paul, and effectively causes a break between Isalina and the husband-to-be whom her father had selected for her, he does so in a cemetery where the village ancestors in some sense witness his betrayal. The meaning of this betrayal of kinship is not just individual, the story suggests; the tale speaks to the entire community, and thus the extended national community that is Haiti, and its forebears.

At the same time, the story stages a confrontation between what we might call narrative realism and narrative indigenism, or official narrative knowledge and the unofficial wisdom made available through Vodoun. The omniscient, French-speaking narrator suggests in the first section of the story that Isalina's delirium and her rejection of Paul have an empirical source, one that readers see firsthand in her fall and the injury to her head. Yet first the villagers and then Paul assert that she has had a spell cast upon her – that she has been "murdered" though she is not dead. The tale proceeds from here to initiate the reader into the secrets of Vodoun, when Paul seeks the aid of the local *papa-loi*, Galba, who lives away from the village on a mountain where he can more easily evade the police. Though unsanctioned by official Haitian culture, it is Galba's practice of Vodoun, foregrounded through long descriptions of his abode and his powerful materials, that finally resolves the mystery surrounding Isalina's crisis and restores her to health and her proper lover. The end of the tale establishes a new genealogy – and effectively restores what is salvageable from the old,

disrupted one – through the paternal figure of the *papa-loi*, to whom Paul ultimately offers himself as a son: “I will be your adoptive son, and will love you as I loved the father who gave me life” (“Je serai votre fils adoptif, et je vous aimerai comme j’ai aimé le père qui m’a donné le jour”).⁶¹ If Nau’s story engages in a certain exoticism, then, it also makes clear that only Galba’s indigenous Haitian practice of Vodoun can resolve the violent crisis of kinship that besets the community – a metaphor for the literary crisis, and the solution, that his brother Émile Nau had proposed for the early Haitian tradition.

VICTOR SÉJOUR AND THE COLONIAL FAMILY ROMANCE

Alongside these and other Caribbean contributions to the *Revue*, Bissette enlists nineteenth-century US literary history as well into a comparative American arena through the journal’s inclusion in the March 1837 issue of Victor Séjour’s violent and haunting short story “Le Mulâtre.”⁶² Written and published in France, the story emerged far from the climate of intense censorship characterizing Séjour’s native Louisiana, remaining virtually unknown to US literary history until as recently as 1997, when it appeared in translation in the *Norton Anthology of African American Literature* and, in 2000, in the Longfellow Institute’s *Multilingual Anthology of American Literature*. “Le Mulâtre” is now the earliest prose fiction piece known to African American literary history and an important text associated with the field of francophone cultural production in nineteenth-century Louisiana.

Produced toward the end of a decade that had witnessed a number of brutally thwarted slave rebellions in Louisiana, “Le Mulâtre” tells the story of a mixed-race Saint-Dominguean slave called Georges and his individual escape from and subsequent revolt against Alfred, his former master. Unbeknownst to Georges until just before both their deaths and the text’s final line, Alfred is also his father. As a mulatto in the French West Indies, Georges occupies a racial and cultural position of liminality, lying unstably between the “most miserable shack” of the slave and the educated gentleman that Georges has the legal and social potential to become in later adulthood, if his paternity is acknowledged.⁶³ Georges exhibits all the literary-stereotypical heroic selflessness of the ubiquitous noble slave until the day Alfred attempts unsuccessfully to seduce Zélie, Georges’s wife and the mother of his two-year-old son. After Alfred orders Zélie’s execution, Georges takes their son and flees with him into the surrounding forest, where he waits for Alfred to marry and produce a son before he

returns to kill the new family. That Georges's murder of his master and father more generally represents the violent, patricidal inevitability of slave revolt becomes clear through the framing device for the central story: an old Haitian peasant named Antoine details the life-crushing experiences of slavery and advises an unnamed first-person narrator, "If [a slave] lives, it is for vengeance, for early on he awakens to his situation . . . and, from the day he shakes off his servility, it would be better for his master to have a famished tiger roaring at his flank than to encounter him face to face" (150–51). Illustrating Antoine's predictions at an individual level, the ensuing tale documents Georges's transformation from a loyal slave into "a tiger preparing to tear apart its prey," a self-realized if predatory free agent who systematically takes revenge upon his former oppressor (174–75).

Séjour was himself the son of a free man of color from Saint Domingue, an immigrant who had relocated to Louisiana, probably during or shortly after the Haitian Revolution, as had many *gens de couleur* of adequate means, fleeing the unstable political situation on the colonial island for the polyglot New Orleans, itself part and parcel of a pan-West Indian slave economy, a "circum-Caribbean cosmopolis," as Joseph Roach puts it, "through which the commerce of the nation's regions and the world's nations passed."⁶⁴ The text of Séjour's "Le Mulâtre" both depends on and generates the temporal and geographic ambiguities surrounding the Haitian Revolution and its attendant migrations of Saint-Dominguean Creoles throughout the wider Caribbean. While the internal story of "Le Mulâtre" is set in colonial Saint-Domingue – in Saint-Marc, the very town where Séjour's father had lived before emigrating to New Orleans – the frame narration takes place in a land that is "aujourd'hui la république de Haïti" – "these days the Republic of Haiti" – as the first-person narrator and traveler to the island reminds (148–49). Whether Antoine and this narrator are meeting in slaveholding Saint-Domingue or in postabolition Haiti – in a time before or after the Haitian Revolution – is unclear. On the one hand, the traveler's national identity is never specified; though he apparently speaks Saint-Dominguean Creole and seems to know Antoine already by sight and name, he also seems to be viewing the "picturesque vegetation" of the island and the "unfamiliar and bizarre forms of natural life" of Saint-Marc either for the first time or after a prolonged absence.⁶⁵ Meanwhile, Antoine is clearly the relic of a former historical moment; "already in his seventies," his aged exterior conceals a power of feeling about slavery that surprises the traveler, who shakes the old man's hand and stops to sit with him (148–49). Antoine addresses this narrator as "Master" and contends, as he begins the story of Georges, that the "infamous sales" of slavery continue to occur, "repeatedly,

at all hours” – though whether he refers to the narrative time of his tale or to the present of his conversation with the traveler remains unknown.⁶⁶ In either case, the traveling narrator’s seemingly matter-of-fact reference to Haiti at the outset of the tale belies the story’s latent concern with the possibility of international insurrection, which becomes unmistakable when Antoine begins to speak in transhistorical and highly enigmatic terms of the injustices of slavery, and of “the Negro . . . go[ing] to the tomb with blood-stained hands and a heart still thirsting for vengeance” (148–49).

In this sense, Séjour’s tale seems to crystallize one of the *Revue*’s main concerns in the issues leading up to the March 1837 issue: the perilous future of Haiti in a Caribbean economy of slavery presided over by an ever expanding United States. In the February installment the journal printed a speech made one month earlier by Brigade General Carrie of the Santo Domingo arrondissement of Haiti on the occasion of the thirty-fourth year of the republic’s postcolonial independence. “The children of Haiti gather today for the thirty-fourth time throughout the republic,” begins the address, “gathered round the palm tree, symbol of their precious liberty, to celebrate the anniversary of their precious independence, and to renew the oath never to bow under the yoke of any foreign domination” (331). Invoking the continuing threat of international encroachment upon Haitian sovereignty, the general’s speech goes on to stress the importance of understanding the colonial past: the “four hundred years of prejudice and slavery that we threw off without the support or the help of any other people; the principles of humanity and Christian charity that prescribed us to forgive and to forget the offenses received from several points of the globe.” Yet “we must never forget,” repeats the general, pointing to the predatory potential posed by the wider Caribbean and “those in this archipelago who misunderstand all the divine, natural, and human laws, and bring contempt on themselves in still tolerating in this century of lights, the armament in their ports, the boats for the infamous speculation of the trade, in order to transport and disembark clandestinely on Christian territories the children of Africa and make them slaves” (332–33).

That the United States plays a crucial role in this wider Caribbean problematic becomes clear at the end of the succeeding article in the same issue, “On the latest news of the island of Cuba, and the political importance of this colony”: “This magnificent island of Cuba, source of many riches, is . . . an imminently important factor in dominating the Caribbean sea, the gulf of Mexico, and the whole southern coast of North America . . . from Havana to New Orleans, there are not but two or three days of sailing!” (336). Excerpted from an “instructive article” on Cuba in an unnamed

mainstream French newspaper, the story notes guardedly that “[w]ithout doubt, the interests of the United States have been a guarantee that England will not plant her pavilion tranquilly in Havana or Santiago.” “But let us beware, however,” the article enjoins its metropolitan French readers:

that the Anglo-Americans, to expand themselves peacefully over the continent, make no concessions to the Anglo-British. The existence of the Spanish race in North America is thus for us a necessary guarantee; with all our efforts, therefore, we must prevent the invasions of the English race.

(que pour s’agrandir paisiblement sur le continent, les Anglo-Américains ne fassent des concessions aux Anglo-Bretons. L’existence de la race espagnole dans l’Amérique du Nord est pour nous une garantie nécessaire; nous devons donc, de tous nos efforts, empêcher les envahissements de la race anglaise.) (337)

Reprinted from an unnamed newspaper in the pages of the abolitionist *Revue*, however, such patriotic remarks about France’s position in the West Indies resonate somewhat differently. While the larger article locates the threat of the “English race” simultaneously in Britain and an expansionist United States, certainly the recent “Anglo-British” emancipation of the slaves in its Caribbean colonies made the “English race” in North America far more threatening to Bissette’s and the *Revue*’s broader interests than England itself. The article’s observations of competing international interests in the Caribbean thus speak to the temporal and structural ambiguities of Séjour’s fictional St-Domingue, “these days the Republic of Haiti,” and vice versa. Making explicit the connections between Haiti and that wider Caribbean, the article observes nervously that the “number of slaves in Cuba is almost equal to that of the whites; the example of Saint-Domingue, and the more recent enfranchisement of blacks in Jamaica, have excited among the blacks of Cuba a voiceless ferment” (336).

Séjour’s text explores the transamerican thematic underpinning precisely such “voiceless ferment” through a series of rhetorical gestures that frame both the beginning and ending of Antoine’s account of Georges’s life as a slave. The “mulâtre” is figuratively conceived when the rich young planter Alfred first beholds the beautiful Senegalese woman who will become Georges’s mother for sale at an auction that divides those who have become, “through violence, the goods, the property of their fellow creatures,” from those who purchase them, play billiards, and “smoke the delicious cigars of Havana” (150–51). While the affiliation with Cuba necessitated by the trade of tobacco, among other luxury products of plantation economies, is never articulated within Antoine’s account, the detail of the Havana cigars foregrounds again the international implications of the ensuing tale. By

the time Georges has fled his life as a slave on Alfred's plantation, vowing to return one day for vengeance, he identifies himself not through the geographic or national circumscription of Saint-Domingue or postrevolutionary France but by "Afrique et liberté" – his veritable passwords as he stumbles into a camp of Maroons hidden far from Alfred's plantation (170–71). The hemispheric resonance of Georges's discovery is unmistakable: a microcosmic community within the wider African diaspora, the Maroon camp is located precisely "in the midst of those dense forests that seem to hold the New World in their embrace" (170–71).

A tale of multiple transamerican perspectives, "Le Mulâtre" is devoted in part to exploring the relation between language and imperial authority through an imagined scenario of psychic and linguistic origins. In this sense, the story has a kind of canonical, anglophone contemporary in Edgar Allan Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*, published in the same year, also in the pages of a serial journal, the *Southern Literary Messenger*. Like Séjour's tale, Poe's story similarly deploys the travel narrative as a frame offering both quasi-anonymity and a venue for exploring the figure of what he called the "half-breed" as well as the attendant questions about racial difference embodied in this trope. These questions play out famously in Poe's text through the boundaries between "the only living white men upon the island" of Tsalal and those inhabitants representing what he cast as "the blackness of darkness."⁶⁷ Both Poe's novella and Séjour's short story play upon widespread cultural anxieties about slave revolt and the threat of black violence unleashed in a displaced southern United States intimately connected to Saint-Domingue. More significantly, however, the two texts share a fascination with extreme psychological states, the mental delusions and hauntings that can accompany intense suffering or guilt. Of course, Poe has long been the consummate subject for psychological models of literary criticism, especially psychoanalytic accounts of prohibited desires and linguistic origins, producing what some have seen as veritable therapeutic parables in the symbolic structures of his tales. Séjour, I would suggest, was interested in similar issues – though from a very different point of view. Indeed, read against Poe and the larger terrain of US racial ideologies that his work sustained, Séjour's story articulates what we might view as a transamerican commentary on the nature of colonial discourse, precisely as it emerged from the repressed kinships and desires structuring a slaveholding family.⁶⁸

Despite its brevity, "Le Mulâtre" deploys a complex sequence of embedded narratives collectively relating the tangled genealogy of one colonial family – so much so that simply to relate the story's interweaving plotlines

as a whole is to reveal the text's self-consciousness about the colonial implications of kinship and the larger discourse structuring its own narration of family. Within a frame supplied by the unnamed first-person narrator – which centers around his unspecified relation to the “vieillard nègre” whom he knows by name as Antoine and from whom he has previously extracted the promise of “the story of [his] friend Georges” – unfold two further stories of kinship and revelation: the first of the enslaved Laisa and her reunion with her brother Jacques, the second of Laisa's son Georges and his discovery of his hidden paternity (148, 150–51). Grafting political order onto familial genealogy, the text locates colonial discourse in an exclusively patriarchal realm from the first fact we learn about Georges – that his life is defined by the lack not of a paternal figure but of the very “nom de son père,” a phrase whose repetition within the text suggests that the “mystery that surrounded his birth” is as much discursive as biological (156–57). The withheld paternal name, which Georges “would have given ten years of his life to know,” denies the slave his complete selfhood, his full capacity as a speaking subject within the colonial order (158–59). In the small pouch he wears containing his father's portrait lies his “total inheritance,” a simultaneous presence and absence: both a phallic symbol of potential signification, capable of revealing the name of his father, and the feminized deferral of any such signification, the mystery he tries but fails repeatedly to penetrate (“percer”), forbidden by his mother to open it until he reaches an appropriate age (156–57).

Colonial discourse revolves here around the affirmation and the denial of this paternal name, as passed from father to legitimate son – from Alfred not to Georges but to the official heir he has prayed for, “humbly kiss[ing] the floor of the church, praying to the holy Virgin of sorrows to grant him a son” (172–73). In the father's name, the story suggests, lies the security of representation as manifested both in the ostensible racial purity of the biological bloodline and in the ostensibly unshakable political predominance of the *patrie* or paternal colonial power itself. The foregone conclusion of Antoine's tale is that all significance of the paternal name in this colonial order necessarily depends for its coherence on the repression of certain illegitimate relations. Overlaying a vast network of hidden kinships, the fixity of the colonial father's name necessitates the dissolution of the slave family – the institutionalized perpetuation of “the husband without the wife . . . the sister without the brother . . . the mother without her children” – whose own origins cast doubt upon the otherwise knowable nature of more official genealogies (150–51). Georges's wife Zélie poses a threat to Alfred not only because she has thwarted his seductions, in other

words, but because she embodies the dangerous potential of an unseparated family of slaves; her execution curtails its reproductive possibilities, exemplifying Antoine's ominous remark that "a Negro . . . must not love his wife or his children" (148–49).

The narrative thus traces the fissures in the central claims of colonial discourse to reproductive certainty and genealogical stability. Antoine's tale begins with the introduction of Laisa to her new master as a "guaranteed" woman, "pure as the dew from the sky" (152–53). The slavetrader promises Alfred both a virgin and a woman capable of bearing children, a symbol of purity yet, paradoxically, a reproductive vessel for his own unacknowledged offspring, the enslaved "mulâtre" he can admire from a distance with a breeder's pride, the pride of "the horseman . . . for the most handsome and vigorous of his racing steeds" (158–59). Yet even where the tale's main subject of illegitimate kinship is concerned, the narrative carefully foregrounds the limits of paternal certainty. Alfred himself is "convinced" that he is Georges's father, but only "as much as it was possible to be" (156–57). Antoine's scrupulous distinction between Zélie as a woman of sexual virtue "rare among women" and those female slaves "who sell their love, or give themselves freely to their master" only highlights larger colonial anxieties about the racialized female body as the tempting destroyer of lineal determinacy, the potential bearer of an intertwined and always partially unknowable genealogy (162–63). Antoine's tale culminates in the sight of Zélie, prominently displayed as she nears death, a scapegoat for the cultural fears she has embodied in her living form: "the next day, the crowd pressed around a gallows upon which was suspended the body of a young Mulatress. When she was fully dead, the hangman took down her corpse and placed it in a pine box, and ten minutes later body and coffin were thrown into a ditch dug on the edge of the forest" (172–73).

The tale thus dramatizes the dependence of colonial discourse upon a collective and spectacular disavowal of the very desires that produce its illegitimate genealogies. Imploring repeatedly that Zélie's life be spared by "a single word" from Alfred – "un mot . . . un seul . . . un seul mot" – Georges foregrounds the legal and social status of his master's speech even as he inadvertently "raise[s] the veil that concealed the crime of his master," an image that captures the double function of revealing while concealing that the larger tale enacts (166–67, 168–69). The story's concern with revelation shapes the early scene of brother-sister recognition between Laisa and Jacques, which clearly foreshadows the final scene of revelation occurring when Georges recognizes himself as Alfred's son. Yet this brother-sister embrace, misinterpreted by the master as sexual "impertinence" for

which Jacques is to be punished, also adumbrates the structural and biological incest informing the larger slaveowning culture of what Antoine calls “almost rape” (“Laisa . . . fut presque violée”) when describing Laisa’s impregnation by Alfred (154–55). Brother-sister incest thus also haunts the unspoken relation between Georges and his wife Zélie, also a mixed-race slave on Alfred’s plantation whom Antoine somewhat unconvincingly professes to have “forgotten to tell” about (“J’avais oublié de vous dire . . .”) until his narrative cannot proceed without her (162–63).

Finally, just as Georges is unknowingly impelled toward his father as if by “instinct,” Alfred finds himself driven toward his son’s wife (“poussé par je ne sais quelle fatalité”), desiring the woman who is structurally, and very likely also biologically, his daughter (162–63). In the generic Oedipal triangles shaping the narrative, father and son struggle over this daughter/sister-wife rather than the mother, who has already died while forbidding Georges to demystify too soon the secret of his paternity. Tangled up in these incest prohibitions, Alfred’s crime and Georges’s compulsive repetition of it through two murders that structurally mirror the destruction of his own family (“he was waiting until Alfred, like Georges, had a wife and child” [172–73]) lead Georges inevitably and unknowingly to kill the very father he has been seeking – a dramatic closure that lends the narrative the simultaneously fate- and desire-driven proportions of a Greek tragedy set in colonial Saint-Domingue. Goaded Georges to end the torment and take his life, Alfred reveals his secret paternal identity:

– Strike, executioner . . . strike . . . since you have poisoned her, you may as well kill your fa – the axe fell and Alfred’s head rolled on the floor, but the rolling head murmured distinctly the last syllable – ther . . . Georges thought he had heard wrong, but the word father, like a funeral bell, resounded in his ear; now, to be certain, he opened the fatal bag . . . ah! He cried, I am cursed . . . a shot was heard; and the next morning they found near the corpse of Alfred that of the unhappy Georges . . . (178–81)

As a story that narrates the hidden relations between illegitimate kinship and illicit desire subtending the racial discourses of New World slavery, Antoine’s tale culminates in the mulatto son’s symbolic castration of his white father as well as the larger, paternal order of colonialism he represents. Figuring the inevitability of slave revolt as patricide, the story attests that the master’s genealogy and thus his fate are inextricable from those of his doomed slaves. Georges himself effectively explains this to Alfred just before Zélie’s execution, offering a multivalent warning that encapsulates the entire tale: “You don’t realize that her life is attached to yours” (168–69).

Séjour's "Le Mulâtre" thus imports into the family romance of Western literary history a critique of colonial discourse situated within a specifically transamerican framework. Beginning with the temporal and geographic slippage surrounding the itinerant narrator's designations of Saint-Domingue and Haiti, the text undermines its own security of representation, the implied narrative contract to stabilize the name of the (colonial) father at the center of its plot. Exposing instead the gaps within its own modes of telling, the story reveals a colonial discourse that is finally as fractured as the broken utterance of the word "father" at the gruesome end of the text: "pè – re." The paternalistic imperialism for which this broken word stands still resounds in Georges's ear like a funeral bell after its completion by the decapitated head of the father himself.

TRANSNATIONALISM, MULTILINGUALISM, AND THE EARLY HISTORIES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE

The tangled narratives of "Le Mulâtre" provide an irresistible analogy for the *Revue's* own deployments and refashionings of literary history, for the ways in which its literary contributions signify multiply across the cultural and linguistic borders that are also the journal's object of critique. Anti-nationalist in its unwillingness to claim writers and texts for the tradition of any one colony or country, language or culture, the *Revue* was instead organized by a set of common political goals and aimed at establishing a usable continuity rather than a radical break with the literary past. In this respect, the issues of the *Revue des Colonies* open a window onto a transnational and multilingual dimension of early African American literature more generally, engendering a dialogue that embraces a number of pre-1900, hemispherically American "writers of color" (in the anticolonial sense of the phrase that Bisette proposes), as even the most cursory survey of examples can show.

It is worth recalling, for instance, that not only the first African American short story but the first African American anthology of poetry was written and published in French: *Les Cenelles*, an 1845 collection of verse by a group of Louisiana free men of color, including Séjour.⁶⁹ Two years before the appearance of *Les Cenelles*, many of the same francophone writers of color had contributed their work, along with that of several white Creole authors, to an interracial collaborative effort that resulted in the literary journal *L'Album littéraire: Journal des jeunes gens, amateurs de littérature*, devoted largely to disseminating social and political criticism, including short fiction and poetry that exposed the widespread practice of *placage*, the

institutionalized concubinage of women of color, among white elite men throughout Louisiana's history, from the colonial period through the nineteenth century.⁷⁰ Though the journal was short lived, running bimonthly for less than a year, it featured a group of francophone intellectuals powerfully dissenting from the prevailing Anglo-American order in the mid-century years.

Yet the African American tradition more broadly has often understood the provenance of its own readership in relation to a wider literary and political problematic that exceeded nationalist constraints, as the work of Paul Gilroy and Sandra Gunning, among others, has convincingly shown.⁷¹ As early as 1789, Equiano's narrative of slavery and freedom encompassed not only the English selfhood he would adopt in later life but the fluctuating identities imposed upon him through the transamerican course of his existence as a slave within and between the West Indies and the North American colonies, from "Barbadoes" to "Virginia county."⁷² By the mid-nineteenth century, Harriet Jacobs would open her *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by tracing the flight of her maternal great-grandmother and her three children from South Carolina to the home of relatives in the Spanish colonial region of St. Augustine during the American Revolution. Captured and returned to Anglo-American territory, where they were permanently separated and sold to different purchasers, these ancestors provide Jacobs's narrative with a prominent example of the ways in which slavery underwrote the ideals of the Revolution from its very inception and of the geographical as well as genealogical interconnectedness of the colonial Americas.⁷³

The writings and wider career of Frederick Douglass offer a particularly rich instance of this hemispheric consciousness. Alongside the autobiographical narratives and the Fourth of July oratorical polemic for which he is most famous, Douglass's oeuvre includes journalistic articles on the abolition of slavery in the British West Indies as well as numerous writings from the period of his ambassadorship to Haiti after the Civil War. Yet it was in his only work of fiction, a deceptively straightforward novella titled "The Heroic Slave," that Douglass explored the Atlantic space of "natural law" lying between an internally slavetrading United States and the free British port of Nassau. Based on the historical case of an 1841 revolt of slaves aboard a US slave ship sailing between Virginia and Louisiana, and redirected to land in Nassau, Douglass's 1853 novella examines Anglo-American racial ideologies colliding with the perspective of Afro-Caribbeans in a free British colony. With particular self-consciousness to the politics of literary and national traditions, the tale invites readers to interpret what it calls the "marks, traces, possibles, and probabilities" emerging from its opposition

of official national history and an unofficial transamerican historical account recorded in old Virginia chattel records and the travels of a slave ship appropriately (and historically) called the *Creole*.⁷⁴

Martin Delaney's serialized novel *Blake, or the Huts of America* (1862–63) makes a related argument about the political, familial, and literary interconnectedness of the United States and the West Indies. In the novel's second half, Delaney's protagonist Henry Blake, a fugitive slave from Mississippi and the itinerant mastermind of slave revolts in the southern United States, reveals himself to be in fact "the lost boy of Cuba," a free man of color, the son of a wealthy black Cuban tobacco manufacturer, and the cousin of the historical mulatto Cuban poet Gabriel de la Concepción Valdés, popularly known as Plácido.⁷⁵ As Blake and the Cuban poet deploy their newly rediscovered affiliation to plot a large-scale rebellion based in the Spanish slaveholding colony, Delaney's novel explores the political implications of transamerican literary transmission as well as various symbolic forms of translation. Blake can entrust his cousin with the secret of his mission to free the slaves in Cuba only because he has "read across the water, in a Cuba journal at New Orleans, a lyric from [Plácido's] pen, in which the fire of liberty blazed as from the altar of a freeman's heart."⁷⁶ Himself a kind of "scholar," able not only to read and write but to "cipher," Blake is himself "translated" by his encounter with Plácido into Henrico Blacus, the leader of a transamerican slave rebellion that will, the narrator implies, have lasting historical significance in the future. At the same time, Blake's encounter with Plácido catalyzes the larger narrative's translation of the Baltimore ship known as *Merchantman* into the Spanish vessel called *Vulture*, whose illegal international slavetrading activities are to be hidden from British antislavery authorities under the protection of US flags. As Delaney recognizes, this was a common practice among those US slaveholders and their representatives who sought to continue participation in the international trade by representing their nationality differently while selling and while traveling between ports.

Blake incorporates as a minor character Richard Robert Madden, the British author of a famous polemic that leveled precisely the same charges as the novel that US ships were engaging illegally in the Cuban slave trade. Addressed to Walter Channing's son, US abolitionist and man of letters William Ellery Channing, the pamphlet entitled *A Letter to W. E. Channing, D. D. on the Subject of the Abuse of the Flag of the United States, in the Island of Cuba, and the Advantage taken of its Protection in Promoting the Slave Trade* was published in Boston in 1839. Madden had served as a diplomat in Cuba, during which time he became involved with the Domingo del Monte

reformist literary circle that generated a number of influential nineteenth-century Cuban authors (and will be discussed in the next chapter). While Madden made a significant impact on this group of Creole Cuban intellectuals, who sought in part to provide him with literary material that would gain the attention of the powerful London Anti-Slavery Society, his most important contribution to Cuban literary history was his translation and publication of the only extant narrative written by a Cuban slave, *Autobiografía de un esclavo*, written by Juan Francisco Manzano in 1839 – a text that Madden effectively supplied with a broader, transamerican frame by juxtaposing it with his own articles on racial ideology in the United States and the proto-imperialist US slaveholding presence in Cuba.⁷⁷ Because Madden published his translation of Manzano's autobiography anonymously, as the representative work of "A Slave in the Island of Cuba," a number of subsequent nineteenth-century US writers tended to attribute the narrative to the more famous Plácido, conflating the two authors despite their very different backgrounds and political destinies. (One such writer was Delaney's compatriot William Wells Brown, who confused the two Cuban writers in his history *The Black Man: His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements*, published in the same year as *Blake*).⁷⁸ Whether or not Delaney created his own version of Plácido with Manzano also in mind, he clearly included Madden in his novel, introducing the character "Dr. M— n, the British consul," who is thrown into jail for allegedly inciting "a Negro insurrection in Cuba" (294).

Though the incident is a brief one within *Blake*, serving largely to illustrate the panic of the colonial authorities as Blake and Plácido plot their rebellion, Madden's presence locates the narrative's larger argument about the high political stakes of transamerican literary relations. Thus Plácido in Delaney's novel proves a threat not only to Cuban slaveholders but to US slaveholding interests within the Caribbean because he writes his political ideals "in sentiments of song, enigmatically, though comprehensively," that "like a lightning flash, ran through every mind the length and breadth of the island" – and make their way finally across the water to New Orleans (238). Indeed, Delaney's Plácido is not finally the political martyr of the 1844 antislavery *Conspiración de la Escalera* or *Ladder Conspiracy* (as the historical Plácido was), but instead the victim of US businessmen in Cuba during the 1850s, who beat him until he is dying after he enters a bookstore in Havana. The implications of an overlapping crisis of US literary and political imperialism are unmistakable, as the literary establishment embodied in the "American bookstore" imagines itself threatened by the

presence of a Cuban intruder and responds immediately with violent steps to contain his emerging power (307).

If Delaney places his own text into politically fraught conversation with a Cuban literary history represented by Plácido and Manzano, the West Indian narrative of Mary Prince foregrounds the transamerican dimensions of a specifically female history of slavery. The only testimony of an anglophone Caribbean slave woman known today, Prince's 1831 account of her experiences opens by establishing the locus of her owner's career as "master of a vessel which traded to several places in America and the West Indies": "a very harsh, selfish man," he is feared by everyone including his wife, whom he often leaves "to reside in other female company" in another part of the Caribbean, a place whose name Prince purports to have forgotten.⁷⁹ This unspecified site of a concubine "at some place in the West Indies" signals the first coordinate in a transatlantic cartography of female enslavement subtending the masculine realm of commerce and trade more familiar to nineteenth-century readers of Prince's testimony. Bringing to graphic light a relation of sexuality and enslavement shaping the history of slave women in the Americas, Prince's narrative remains silent on the subject of her own sterility (the likely result of physical abuse) but inextricably links her own reproductive body to that of a female slave from the francophone Caribbean, "a French Black called Hetty, whom my master took in privateering from another vessel, and made his slave" (65). The master's "terrible passion" for flogging Hetty – "stripped quite naked, notwithstanding her pregnancy" – suggests a personal investment in her pregnant state that belies the apparently minor infraction she has committed in allowing one of his cows to wander from its tether. The gruesome termination of Hetty's pregnancy in the delivery "after severe labour of a dead child" – and soon afterwards of her own life, as "her body and limbs swelled to a great size . . . till the water burst out . . . and she died" – results in Prince's transformation into a figurative surrogate for the "French Black," whose sexual duties she never names, observing simply that "[a]fter Hetty died, all her labours fell on me" (67). The multivalence of Prince's language in describing the death of her "French" counterpart evokes the double forms of labor interlocking the subjection of female slaves throughout the Americas in an unwritten, unofficial history exceeding the cultural and linguistic boundaries of national histories and, as Prince's silence on the subject suggests, the very boundaries of language itself.

A quarter-century later, from a different perspective and within a very different literary genre, the free-born Jamaican writer Mary Seacole

published her *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* (1857), an account of her life and travels in the Caribbean, Central America, and Europe that directly confronts the competing racial and literary ideologies emerging from an imperialist US presence in the larger Americas. Casting herself from the beginning of the narrative as “quite a female Ulysses,” Seacole situates her text within a Western classical tradition even as she deploys her itinerant account to explore the geopolitical implications of the genre itself. Seacole attributes her propensity for travel to her father’s side of the family and its “good Scotch blood coursing in [her] veins,” though she also defines herself ambiguously as a Creole, a “race” in which “energy and activity . . . are not always found.”⁸⁰ Without specifying what she means by Creole – a person of exclusively European descent born in the Americas, a person of African descent born in the Americas, or a person of mixed race – Seacole nevertheless opens her narrative by privileging the Scottish part of her ancestry over the “Creole.” By the second chapter, however, she addresses her British readership (the narrative was first published in London) directly, announcing: “I have a few shades of deeper brown upon my skin which shows me related – and I am proud of the relationship – to those poor mortals whom you once held enslaved, and whose bodies America still owns” (14). The circuitous language of her simultaneously revelatory and condemnatory pronouncement elides direct identification with her African ancestry while asserting a relation of kinship based on the institution of slavery, showing her “related” to the former slaves of the British West Indies as well as the current slaves of the United States.

As Seacole travels from Jamaica into the still more heterogeneous space of New Granada (which included what are now Panama and Colombia), where the “refuse of every nation” is gathered, she focuses her critical gaze more pointedly upon those traveling “Americans . . . who would fain whop all creation abroad as they do their slaves back home” (41). Indeed, Seacole notes that “many of the negroes” among whom she lives and travels were in fact “fugitive from the Southern States,” and had “sought refuge in this and the other States of Central America, where every profession was open to them,” and where, confronted by numerous white travelers from the United States, they “bore themselves before their old masters bravely and like men” (50–51). Seacole’s testimony reorients the northward focus of the US fugitive slave narrative, linking the political and cultural destinies of the United States and a wider America through these former slaves and now eminent citizens of the New Granada Republic. At the same time, her narrative attends to a ubiquitous “Yankee” presence encroaching upon Central America and the West Indies in the guise of white US travelers on

their way to California. In Seacole's account, these expansionist explorers do not always make it as far as, or remain located within, the former Mexican territory: many have also, as she puts it in a revealing metaphor, "fertilized Cuban and Nicaraguan soil," leaving the New Granada people to "dread . . . their schemes for annexation" (51). Read as a part of the larger conversation instantiated by the *Revue des Colonies*, Seacole's narrative – along with the works of Jacobs, Douglass, Delaney, Prince, and many others – addresses the ways in which American writers of African descent were engaged long before the twentieth century in disparate and sometimes conflicting attempts to localize, politicize, and theorize the contours of the comparative American literary cultures that their own writings did much to create.

*Cuban stories*CUBAN WRITERS, US READERS: TRANSMISSION AND
APPROPRIATION IN THE 1840S

Writing in exile in New York, José Martí detailed for the July 1888 issue of the *Economista Americano* the literary career of a countryman who had died a half-century earlier, José María Heredia, “the first poet of America.”¹ As is always the case with “the poetic soul,” Martí explains, Heredia had early suffered a great need for beauty that led him to follow the steps of poets before him, and that infused “his first sentiments, his first prose” with imitative paeans to the literary past. Yet in the case of great poets, Heredia among them, such slavish gestures soon outpace their models: “From these impulses comes vibrating genius, like a sea of sonorous waves, from Homer to Whitman.”² If Martí placed Walt Whitman at one end of a genealogy of poetic grandeur, he had a less favorable evaluation of Whitman’s contemporary, William Cullen Bryant, who had died just ten years before Martí’s essay appeared. Hailed since the early 1840s, both abroad and at home, as the leading poet of his country and the first to achieve worldwide fame, Bryant was, Martí acknowledges elsewhere, “illustrious,” “socratic,” “a thinking poet.”³ But Bryant’s life had been “excessively gentle”; and Martí defines the US writer accordingly (and scathingly) as “a poet, a white poet, in the comfortable style of Wordsworth, not like those unfortunate and glorious ones who nourish themselves on their own entrails.”⁴ Bryant was a lesser poet than Heredia, in Martí’s estimation, precisely for his lack of Americanness, evidenced in a nearly obsequious focus on Europe. “In the very United States where Washington has just triumphed,” Bryant “sings of Thessaly,” an ancient province embodying a “classical culture” that was equally familiar to Heredia.⁵

But Heredia’s classicism should be distinguished from Bryant’s, Martí contends, for by the time the Anglo-American turned his verse to Europe, Heredia “already had by then his own poetry,” a poetics “of the beauty

of those American countries where he lived in his childhood; of . . . the valleys of Caracas . . . of those Mexican summits and plateaus . . . of Santo Domingo, where fire runs in the veins of the trees . . . of Cuba, watched over – ay! – by so many souls cut down in bloom . . .”⁶ Martí insists upon Heredia’s poetic grounding, in other words, within the hemispheric and literary geography of what he later termed “Nuestra América,” “Our America,” a coalition of Latin American sites exclusive of the imperialist United States represented by Bryant.⁷ The “white poet,” meanwhile, singing of Thessaly, serves merely as a eurocentric point of reference against which to understand the greater Cuban artist.⁸

Martí’s estimation of Bryant would probably strike most contemporary readers as not far off the mark; it is certainly prescient in its anticipation of the Anglo-American poet’s currently devalued place in US literary history. How the most renowned US poet of the nineteenth century has today become one of the least read is a complicated story, one that is now inseparable from a modernist literary history that has displaced him from the national canon in favor of Whitman. At the same time, it seems clear that the scarcity of recent publications devoted to him, as well as his virtual disappearance from Americanist syllabi and conference programs, reflects an unspoken consensus in the field that his interest as a literary figure has waned with the rise of more explicitly topical and multicultural preoccupations. Perhaps Bryant’s fate in the twentieth century was sealed by the editors of the 1917 *Cambridge History of American Literature*, who dubbed him an “American Wordsworth,” “the most Puritan of our poets,” author of what has been considered possibly the most Anglo of Anglo-American literature.⁹ A writer best known for his deep-seated literary Europhilia, Bryant consistently revealed an investment in European poetic styles (particularly those of the English Romantics) that informed even his verse about the flora and fauna of the United States.¹⁰ By the time Matthiessen chose to exclude him from his canonizing formation of the mid-twentieth century, Bryant’s purportedly “fatal imitation of Europe” prevented his authorial participation in “America’s . . . affirming its rightful heritage.”¹¹

Yet if Bryant’s poetry failed to meet the aesthetic standards for inclusion in Matthiessen’s “American Renaissance,” his wider literary career exemplifies the nineteenth-century literary transamericanism that is the subject of this book. Indeed, despite Martí’s remarkably expansive ability to envision a novel set of transnational literary and political paradigms for the Americas – and his status now as a quasi-prophetic figure for a new hemispheric cultural studies¹² – in his evaluations of Bryant he was emphatically wrong about the geographical and linguistic scope of the poet’s literary sensibility. In

fact, Bryant's formal poetic orientation toward Europe overshadowed a compelling, hemispherically American dimension within the story of his career, a multilingual literary consciousness that embraced both Heredia and Cuba, establishing his significant role in the literary culture of the nineteenth-century hispanophone Americas. This dimension of the poet's career spanned most of the century, running roughly from the 1820s apex of enthusiasm for inter-American solidarity through his late trip to Mexico and Cuba in 1872, a trajectory that this chapter takes as an entryway into a particular moment within a wider transamerican renaissance – the decade of the 1840s and the status of US-Cuban literary and political relations in the years surrounding the Mexican War.

If the 1830s could be characterized in part by the consolidation of US nativism directed at the francophone Caribbean and a wariness in particular of the proximity of Haiti to the southern states, the 1840s saw the rise of related fears about a repetition of the “scenes of St. Domingo” on the even more proximate island of Cuba. It was widely alleged that the Haitian revolutionary leader Jean-Jacques Dessalines had sent emissaries to Cuba in the early years of the century to incite rebellion among the slaves, and that their influence had resulted in the infamous Aponte Conspiracy of 1812, an uprising of free men of color and slaves in an attempt to establish an independent Cuban republic modeled after Haiti. By the early 1840s, a number of factors contributed to an increasing investment in the colony's political and national fate registered in the US public sphere. Still under heavy Spanish colonial control, Cuba embodied what one *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* writer called a “moral and political volcano – teeming, under an outside of forced tranquility, with a fiery ocean of insurrection and massacre – ready at any moment to spread, by explosion, its boiling lava over everything in its neighborhood – separated from our Southern States by a channel that may be traversed in a few hours.”¹³ Such anxieties over potential “insurrection and massacre” on the island were linked in part to Cuba's widely known defiance of the international treaties banning the slave trade. Continuing to import new African slaves to the colony, Cuba was perceived as “inhabited by men of another race,” on the one hand, and in a kind of demographic racial peril, on the other: “in imminent danger of being irreconcilably lost,” as one Cuban writer quoted in the *Democratic Review* put it, “to the white race and the civilized world.”¹⁴

At the same time, in the wake of the 1833 British abolition of slavery, England strategically placed antislavery activists in Cuban diplomatic posts during the late 1830s and 1840s, contributing to the rise of abolitionist sentiment on the island. The United States cast a cynical eye on this course

of events: Britain had “ruined her own West-India colonies, by paying \$100,000,000 to emancipate the slaves,” as one US journalist writing in the 1840s saw it, and was thus conspiring to liberate Cuba from Spain while securing political and financial control over the colony.¹⁵ Fears of English conspiracies fostering wide-scale Cuban slave revolts come to a head shortly after the reputed abolitionist David Turnbull was appointed British Consul at Havana in 1842. In 1844 Turnbull was implicated in the notorious *Conspiración de la Escalera* or Ladder Conspiracy, a three-year covert attempt to end slavery, which registered with a number of US intellectuals and politicians as nothing less than an attempt to implement in Cuba “a government on the St. Domingo plan,” and to wage a massive threat against the slaveholding economy to the north.¹⁶ Within the next two years, the US-Mexican War of 1846–48 would raise further issues in regard to Cuba’s political future. The outcome of the war fulfilled what one writer envisioned as the foundational dream of a national founding father – “the hope expressed by Jefferson in relation to the Mexican states; viz, that Spain would be strong enough to hold them until the United States should be ready to embrace them” – even as it raised the possibility that “the last and most valuable of European colonies is about to be annexed to the ‘Model Republic.’”¹⁷ The annual total of colonial taxes that Cuba paid to Spain, observed the same writer, would balance “in little more than two years” what the United States had paid “to defray the expense of the conquest of Mexico.”¹⁸ The annexation of Cuba and its plantation economy would thus constitute a significant double function in the project of US expansionism, widening the territorial parameters of the United States even as it provided a crucial source of funding for potential future conquests. In 1848 President James Knox Polk, fresh from the US-Mexican War victory that ceded California and New Mexico to the United States through the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, attempted to purchase Cuba from Spain. Though this project was unsuccessful, the issue of annexation remained a pressing one throughout the remainder of the decade and into the next, with anxious US slaveholders urging the conquest of Cuba by whatever means possible to avoid the establishment of what one southern diplomat termed “an Ethiopico-Cuban republic” that could spread slave insurrection northward.¹⁹

The decade of the 1840s marked as well a veritable renaissance of US intellectual interest in Cuban literary culture. Unlike the literary hispanophilia of the 1820s, however, which had subsumed its cultural and aesthetic relation to the Spanish Americas within a wider rhetoric of hemispheric solidarity and common cause against European imperialism, this later affiliative

revival was manifestly appropriative: the widespread consumption, distribution, and discussion of Cuban writings in North American literary circles fashioned them as exemplars of an insular patriotism that would ultimately serve the needs and profit of US expansionism. A fascinating instance of this sensibility can be found in a translation of and commentary on Domingo del Monte's *Notes on Cuban Education*, translated by Alexander Hill Everett, and published in the April 1842 volume of the *Southern Quarterly Review*. An influential senator from Massachusetts and an editor of the *North American Review*, Everett employs a rhetoric of easy familiarity in introducing del Monte's *Notes* as well as the Cuban writer himself to the journal's subscribers:

The author, Domingo del Monte, a gentleman of superior talents and finished education, connected with the most considerable families in the Havana, is already advantageously known to the literary world, as one of the principal contributors to the *Cuba Review*, of which he was for a time the editor. That journal, as our readers may recollect, was commenced some years ago, under apparently very favorable auspices, and sustained itself in a manner highly creditable to its authors and the community in which it appeared, until it was suppressed by the government.²⁰

Everett's account registers its sensibility of inter-American affiliation through a scene of obvious cultural elitism, in which a writer from the upper echelons of US literary culture invokes a counterpart in Cuban intellectual circles in a spirit of cosmopolitan urbanity and familial privilege.

More remarkable about this passage, however, is its blithe assumption of a longstanding familiarity among its US readers with the ins and outs of Cuban literary production. In a casual gesture toward those details of the Cuban intellectual world which his "readers may recollect," Everett opens a window onto a transamerican cultural arena in which Cuban literary and political journals, their editorship, and even their governmental suppression were seemingly well-known to a readership along the east coast of the United States, from Atlanta, the *Southern Quarterly Review's* place of publication, to Boston, where Everett then resided and wrote as a frequent contributor to the southern journal. Indeed, the *Southern Quarterly Review* as well as northeastern publications such as the *North American Review* and *Littell's Living Age* embraced a host of Cuban authors and literary institutions in a homogenizing rhetoric of cultural assimilation: from the exiled priest and activist Félix Varela (discussed in Chapter Two) and his contributions to a philosophical dialogue recorded in the *Diario*, "the 'respectable daily' of the Havana, and . . . the *Noticioso*, its rival claimant for popular favor," in which familiar debates "between the sensual and

transcendental schools of philosophy” are “sustained, with equal zeal and perseverance, as is habitually shown at Boston by the Ripleys, the Nortons, the Brownsons, and the Walkers”²¹; to the widely praised volumes on Cuba entitled *La Havane* by the condesa de Merlin, native Cuban turned French countess, a “fair author [who] belongs to the De Stael, rather than the Edgeworth, class of female writers . . . combin[ing] the generosity and vigor of the manly mind, with the elegance and vivacity which are the more usual and appropriate gifts of her own sex”;²² to the social scientist and travel writer Ramon de la Sagra, “well-known in this country by . . . his ‘Five Months in the United States,’ – a book, by the bye, which ought to be translated.”²³

The US literary elite elaborating this discourse of cross-cultural affiliation made the political and ideological constraints on Cuban writing an integral part of their coverage. Within their collective narrative of Cuban patriotism and longing for independence figured a remarkable range of Cuban writers and intellectuals, many of them implicated in the 1844 Escalera conspiracy: not only del Monte, “recently fallen under the ban of the colonial government, on suspicion of having been concerned in fomenting the late discontents among the slaves,” but also “the elegant negro Plácido,” “a person of superior talent” and “one of the leaders of the late conspiracy,” “recently executed at Havana” (“nothing can be more original than his compositions,” including the widely cited “A mi madre,” the “sonnet which he wrote after being committed to prison”); the novelist Cirilo Villaverde, “a scholar full of the generous enthusiasm and patriotism natural to a cultivated mind”; the intellectual leader José de la Luz y Caballero, “recently arrested and imprisoned as an accomplice in the late conspiracy”; the antislavery polemicist José Antonio Saco, “that enlightened patriot and excellent citizen,” sentenced to exile when his writings “gave umbrage to the jealous spirit” of the colonial governor; and the contraband *Cuban Review* (claimed in one article to be “founded on the plan” of US periodicals, “under the auspices of the [Cuban] Patriotic Society”) as well as New York-based Cuban publications such as the revolutionary *La verdad*, “an able periodical . . . advocat[ing] the cause of Cuban freedom.”²⁴

The pages of US literary periodicals thus dramatized the chilling effect of the Escalera on Cuban cultural expression, from the banning of writings by del Monte and Luz to Saco’s arrest and exile and the concomitant suppression of the *Cuba Review*. In doing so, they often rendered the Cuban literary arena into a veritable provocation to US annexation. “We have been led to make these remarks,” observes Everett near the end of his April 1842 article, not only out of “our personal regard for the enlightened and

estimable authors of these works, but by the interest which now extends itself in this country to everything connected with the situation and fortunes of Cuba.”²⁵ Purporting to “express the sentiments of the enlightened and patriotic natives of the island” as they would for themselves, Everett’s article concludes with a passage taken from Saco, unmistakably chosen for its potential invitation to US expansionism: “To procure for [Cuba] a substantive, national existence, to make her as distinct from every other country in the political, as she is in the natural world, is, in my humble judgment the mark at which every Cuban patriot should aim. But, if the irresistible force of circumstances should compel us to adopt a different course, where should we look for shelter abroad, with so much satisfaction, as in the arms of the great North American Union?”²⁶

It is this simultaneously affiliative and expansionist milieu of North American fascination with Cuban literary culture that situates Bryant’s career most productively for the purposes of this chapter and the particular competing public spheres of Cuban-US literary relations that it will seek to comprehend. Accordingly, this chapter turns first to what was perhaps Bryant’s most self-conscious meditation on Cuban-US literary and political crossings, the 1829 “Story of the Island of Cuba,” published a full twenty years before the author’s first trip to the colonial island. As I will go on to suggest, however, Bryant’s hispanophilia speaks to only a small part of a much larger genealogy of Cuban-US literary relations in the decade of the 1840s and the years surrounding the US-Mexican War. The questions of expansion and annexation that subtend much of Bryant’s career-long process of literary and journalistic engagement with Cuba (as well as Mexico) exist in a fraught dialectical relation to contemporaneous Cuban literary production and its own negotiations with US imperialism in the Americas. From Cirilo Villaverde’s autobiographical meditations on censorship and the politics of allegory to del Monte’s revealing epistolary exchanges with Everett to Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda’s self-reflexive engagement with Anglo-American literary imperialism in *Sab*, Cuban writers during the 1840s wrote with an acute awareness of the aesthetics and psychologies shaping their northern neighbor’s expansionist aims, an awareness that challenges the frequent reduction of their labors in US literary culture to the level of propaganda. While this chapter takes Bryant as its touchstone, then, it does so in a spirit of mutual Cuban-US defamiliarization: if José Martí could so radically misapprehend the oeuvre of a fellow author just ten years in his grave and with deep literary ties to his own country, we should hardly find it surprising that Cuban-US literary relations in earlier decades of the nineteenth century are characterized by a host of now

largely forgotten strands of comparative American literary history, interweaving narratives of cross-cultural desires and anxious displacements, that together articulate a transamericanism of often uncanny insight into the hemisphere's past as well as its future.

THE TRANSAMERICAN BRYANT: "A STORY OF THE ISLAND
OF CUBA"

The transamerican story embedded within Bryant's long career includes his nearly three-year residence with a Spanish-speaking family from Cuba in New York, important translations of Latin American authors (especially Heredia, the very poet with whom Martí compared Bryant so unfavorably), and numerous writings about Latin American literature and politics, as well as two trips to Cuba (in 1849 and 1872) and one to Mexico in 1872. Made by the first notable US literary figure to visit a capital city in continental Latin America, Bryant's visit to Mexico in particular was a landmark event; Mexican newspapers ran biographical accounts, and Bryant was named an honorary member of several prestigious Mexican cultural organizations.²⁷ After attending numerous parties in his honor given by public officials as well as private citizens, he was invited to appear before President Benito Juárez, who discussed Mexico's political turmoil with the poet and editor.²⁸ Bryant's letters to the New York Evening *Post* during each of these trips provided US readers with rich accounts of life in Cuba and Mexico, offering a series of meditations on the colony and the republic that were under such heavy consideration as possible candidates for annexation.

When Bryant confessed in an 1872 letter to the *Evening Post* from Mexico that he knew "but little yet" of its literature, he modestly elided the fact that he had by then published translations of the work of the Mexican poet José Rosas Moreno, nine of whose translated *Fábulas* appear in Bryant's own *Life and Works*.²⁹ In Mexico City several of Bryant's original poems and prose tales were translated in the newspapers, and he was admitted in an honorary capacity into the Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía Estadística, a group encompassing Mexico's successful novelists and poets, who, Bryant attests, "are numerous, so easily does the melodious language spoken here run into verse."³⁰ Even during his visit to "the Indian town of Santa Anita," he noted the rhymed work of "village poets" inscribed on the walls. Bryant's fascination with the hispanophone literature of the Americas was so enduring, in fact, that it has been suggested that still more of his translations of Spanish-language texts may one day appear; even now some of his translation work includes poets not yet identified.³¹

Bryant wrote extensively for the *Evening Post* and other publications about Latin American subjects from home as well. Discussing figures from Simón Bolívar to Maximilian, the Austrian archduke and short-lived Emperor of Mexico under Napoleon III during the mid-1860s, Bryant drew the attention of his nineteenth-century anglophone readers again and again to American sites outside the United States and continually emphasized what he saw as the interconnectedness of the Americas. At the same time, his travel writings on a tour through the southern United States in 1843 provided his readers with extended observations of the multilingualism of the United States, making clear from a different angle that the linguistic and cultural borders between his “America” and Martí’s were by no means impermeable. On a trip through Florida, for example, the national bard transcribed a hymn sung in the Minorcan dialect of Catalan, “*el Mahones*, as they call it”; the transcription was published as an appendix to his customary letter to the *Evening Post*, along with a translation into Castilian Spanish and descriptions of several old Minorcan customs still preserved within the nineteenth-century United States.³² In New York, too, Bryant continued to bring what he called “the Spanish literature of America” before an anglophone readership, reviewing such novels as *Jicoténcal*, the anonymous fictional account of the Mexican Conquest treated in Chapter Two. His last known poem, written in 1878 less than two months before his death, was entitled “Cervantes”; a homage both to the Spanish author and a language he had loved and studied since his youth, the poem was written for a cultural festival organized by the Spanish-speaking residents of New York, many of whom were also Latin American exiles.

Within our own critical moment, Bryant’s status as a writer of the Americas rather than simply an “American” writer gives us a surprisingly pertinent lens upon cross-cultural affiliations in the Americas while illuminating the various ways in which literary histories have been written and claimed by multiple national and linguistic traditions. Indeed, while Martí appears unaware of the transnational scope of Bryant’s oeuvre – entirely understandable given the poet’s more well-known reputation as a Wordsworthian anglophile – the wider hispanophone American affiliations shaping Bryant’s career have not been lost upon twentieth-century Latin American literary studies. One need only consider the title of Héctor Orjuela’s 1964 study of Bryant and Heredia’s ode to “Niágara” – “Reappraisal of an Old Literary Controversy” – to confirm that the Anglo-American is “an already acclaimed hispanist” in Latin American literary historiography.³³ Not only did Bryant translate and publish Spanish-language literature of the Americas, but his own writing was, as the Latin

Americanist Arnold Chapman observed, among the earliest US poetry to be translated into Spanish by Latin Americans and continued to attract translators in Spanish steadily over the course of the nineteenth century.³⁴ Most recently, Kirsten Silva Gruesz has documented the relation of Bryant's poetry and translation to a larger culture of literary ambassadorship that she situates as part of the transamerican origins of Latino writing.³⁵

Mainstream US literary studies, on the other hand, has registered almost none of the inter-American narrative surrounding Bryant's career, and what it has registered has often perpetuated myths and factual errors that Latin Americanists corrected decades ago. For example, recent work in US literature continues to credit Bryant as the translator of the Cuban revolutionary poet Gabriel de la Concepción Valdés, popularly known as Plácido, though a thoroughly researched Latin Americanist monograph on the Cuban writer from 1964 demonstrated convincingly that Bryant had been falsely credited with these translations.³⁶ At the same time, since the mid-nineteenth century a well-known translation of Heredia's poem "Niágara" has been mistakenly attributed solely to Bryant, even though he himself claimed not to have "felt justified in putting [his] signature to it," as it was not "wholly" his own.³⁷ While Latin Americanists have investigated the potentially multiple authorship of the translation since the early twentieth century, the definitive 1971 biography of Bryant – which cites none of this scholarship – asserts not only that he was the translator but that he met the celebrated Cuban poet in New York, an "acquaintanceship" that "led to his further study of the literature of Spain."³⁸ Here again, Latin American scholarship has documented through Bryant's own correspondence that he never met Heredia – though, as Orjuela observes, the *story* of their friendship became an important symbol of inter-American literary solidarity.³⁹

The notable exception to this general neglect of Bryant's hispanism within US literary studies is Stanley T. Williams's 1955 two-volume study of what he calls the "Spanish background of American literature," a chapter of which is devoted to Bryant's knowledge and use of the literature and culture of Spain and the hispanophone Americas. An unparalleled source of information about US literary interrelations with Spain and Latin America, Williams's study nevertheless assimilates into a Western European comparative literature the various Latin American writers and texts it considers by casting them as inseparable from a monolithic Spanish tradition that renders them all "really one influence."⁴⁰ Constructing Bryant as a kind of one-dimensional ideological hero befitting a Cold War drama rather than as a complex historical subject, Williams presents a narrative of the poet's

career in which “[a]ll nations, all peoples, all individuals in quest of freedom were [Bryant’s] spiritual comrades, and he continued to aid them by every means in his power”: despite a comical “proletarian ardor” that spoils the dignity of some of his poetry on Spanish American themes, “[in] behalf of free Spain in America, he was as fiery as a knife-bearing rebel of ‘El dos de mayo.’”⁴¹

Yet much of Bryant’s writing on the Americas served a broader cultural agenda that his own intellectual circles described as a kind of literary manifest destiny. As the *North American Review* put it in 1849, the year of Bryant’s first trip to Cuba, US intellectuals were charged with “a patriotic duty to fill up the *lacunae* of our information,” given “the indefinite boundaries of our country,” the inevitability that “Mexico shall be fairly incorporated into our glorious confederacy,” and the existence of still further “mysterious tropical nations, with whom it is [our] ‘manifest destiny’ . . . to be more and more closely connected.”⁴² Though Bryant himself condemned the 1848 US aggression on sovereign Mexican territory as “a war in which I take no pride” – and though he deplored US presidential efforts to acquire Cuba from Spain in the late 1850s – his writings on Latin American and US hispanophone topics often propounded a broader Anglo-Saxonist and expansionist ideology in which a glorious US paragon of democracy and civilization would encroach, as he put it in an early poem humorously praising Rhode Island coal as it traveled the hemisphere, “south as far as the grim Spaniard lets thee.”⁴³

Indeed, in the same letter from the city of St. Augustine that painstakingly transcribed and translated a Minorcan hymn, Bryant observed that “in another generation the last traces of the majestic speech of Castile will have been effaced from a country which the Spaniards held for more than two hundred years.”⁴⁴ The similarities between his journalistic description of the Spanish language inevitably “effaced” by an indomitable English and his many poetic accounts of the vanished “woodland tongue” and “sad and simple lay” of the American Indians are obvious. “A noble race!” Bryant repeatedly asserts in the poems written between the two Seminole wars with white settlers, only to insist, “But they are gone.”⁴⁵ Visiting Florida the year after the second Seminole war and on the eve of the US-Mexican war, Bryant imagines both a violent past full of Indians now vanished – “we forded little streams of deep-red color . . . and could almost fancy that the water was still colored with the blood they had shed” (40) – and a future in which the “last traces” of Spanish have disappeared from inside the nation’s rapidly expanding borders. Translation thus becomes for Bryant a written monument documenting a perceived relationship between

time and the Other – a form that simultaneously memorializes and naturalizes an evanescent Indian and Spanish remainder as the necessary sacrifice of US expansionism. “This savage fanaticism has had its day,” Bryant wrote from Mexico almost thirty years later, toward the end of his career; describing anti-Protestant sentiment alongside failed democratic elections, he saw a difficult but certain “remedy” in the emigration into Mexico of US citizens, who would dilute what a member of the Mexican Congress had purportedly called the violence “in [Mexican] blood.”⁴⁶

But it was Cuba that embodied Bryant’s most enduring fantasies of literary manifest destiny and the displaced cultural anxieties of his broader intellectual milieu. Nowhere is this more clear than in the little-discussed prose tale that he called “Story of the Island of Cuba,” which reflects the hemispheric ideals of its decade even as it embeds the transamericanist senses of unease and aspiration that would become explicit during the 1840s. A self-reflexive meditation on Cuban-US literary and political crossings, the story traces the proximity between North America and the Caribbean, testing the fluid boundaries between the two, and projecting onto the island-colony the underlying political tensions pervading the US public sphere. Bryant produced his Cuban tale toward the end of his residency with a Spanish-speaking family from Cuba in New York.⁴⁷ Little is known about the Salazars, who are identified ambiguously in the scholarship as Spanish with business commitments in Cuba.⁴⁸ But it is certain that Bryant’s time with them enabled him to develop a lifelong fluency in Spanish. Parke Godwin, Bryant’s son-in-law and first biographer, noted in 1881 that the Salazars had “entertained many ladies and gentlemen from Cuba,” who brought stories with them, and concluded that Bryant “probably derived the incidents of this narrative from one of them”⁴⁹ – and indeed, its title suggests that the ensuing tale may be not only about but from the colonial island. In this sense, the story might be understood as another form of translation undertaken by the same writer who translated the writings of both Heredia and José Rosas Moreno. Though Bryant had not yet visited Cuba when he published the tale, he recounts the botanical wonders of the island through a narrative voice that does little to clarify the distinction between author and translator: “It were a vain task,” his narrator insists, “to attempt to describe these beautiful plantations in Cuba to one who has seen nothing like them” (265).

Whether or not Bryant adapted his text from a tale recounted by a Cuban guest at the Salazars’, his story presents itself unequivocally as both a product and a process of translation – the bringing forth in English of an authentic Cuban text, the result of a literary transmission from a

Cuban plantation owner and raconteur to his Anglo-American interlocutor. And in fact, Bryant's story does have elements in common with both the Cuban *artículos de costumbres*, critical tales in sketches of local color, and the *leyendas*, legends featuring indigenous populations on the island. A tale of multiple narrators and of multiple potential sources, "A Story of the Island of Cuba" is also self-consciously *about* the inter-American creating and passing of narratives, and reads accordingly as a kind of analogue for the acts of literary transmission informing Bryant's career. At the same time, the story crystallizes a number of more general cultural and literary concerns regarding Cuba's status as "the largest, finest, and most fertile of the West India Islands" (262), a colonial territory that US politicians as early as Jefferson had coveted and sometimes sought to purchase – as well as a cipher for the nation's own perceived vulnerability to racial dissent, slave insurrection, and indigenous retaliation.

The narrator of Bryant's tale is Francis Herbert, an Anglo-American character he invented collectively with Gulian Verplanck and Robert Sands for their three collaborative volumes of *The Talisman*, for which they created a worldwide traveler and committed Orientalist who reports on the exotic and the magical within the United States and abroad.⁵⁰ Herbert's *modus operandi*, in Bryant's contributions to *The Talisman*, is to introduce a native informant midway through the tale who then narrates much of the ensuing text, responding occasionally to questions from Herbert. Herbert's world-traveling persona allowed Bryant to narrativize the crossing of linguistic and cultural boundaries in a number of different hispanophone sites, from what he called the "debatable ground" of Spanish colonial history in Louisiana to the European imperial power to which this ground had once belonged.⁵¹

It was through Herbert that Bryant explored the "almost forgotten" *Romances Moriscos*, or ancient Moorish ballads of Spain, which fascinated him precisely because they were understood as "national ballads" (93). Their paradoxical status as "national" texts – "many of them, written by the Moors themselves" – is in fact what Herbert singles out as most important: the confounding presence of Moorish texts that nevertheless "form an important part of the national literature of the most intolerant of all Christian countries" (93). Herbert's ethnographic account of ancient and contemporary Spain thus underscores the literary permutations of peoples "intermingled," the heterogeneous textuality from which, in Herbert's narrative, the national literature can never fully escape, despite the nation's historical intolerance of difference. Bryant's Spanish, in other words, is inherently a language of crossings: a hybrid tongue deeply informed by a legacy of

mixture that the imperial power would carry with it to the New World, a linguistic matrix on which he in turn would plot the shifting boundaries between the United States and the hispanophone Americas.

Bryant's Herbert introduces his story from Cuba by attributing the dearth of knowledge available to North Americans about the island-colony to a lack of literary transmission. As the "great mart for the trade of Spanish America," Cuba is known commercially, Herbert grants. But "[a]ll the knowledge of it exists in the minds of men too busy to write books, or incompetent to literary pursuits" (262). Acknowledging that he, too, has visited Cuba "in the capacity of a man of business," Herbert proposes nevertheless to fill the literary void surrounding Cuba with his own ensuing story of the island. Literary pursuits are thus both privileged over matters of trade while firmly anchored to them, and literary transmission becomes a form of knowledge that supplements and facilitates commerce. Herbert's particular matter of business, moreover, involves a West Indian merchant who is also a personal relative: "I went there . . . to recover a debt due to the estate of a relation of mine . . . and, being obliged to resort to legal proceedings against the debtor, I was detained longer in the island than is usual with my countrymen" (263). Herbert locates his own literary pursuit within an international legal context involving the contested transmission of money and property. Bryant's "A Story of the Island of Cuba" can begin only once an Anglo-American businessman lays legal claim to the estate of a West Indian relative, directing the flow of capital, as well as the story he has acquired in the process, northward to the United States.

One of the unspoken corollaries of Herbert's business, it turns out, is the identification and classification of the racial origins and characteristics of the Cuban community surrounding his deceased West Indian relative. Contending that the *Habaneros*, or residents of Havana, "come of a good stock – the virtuous, industrious, and poor inhabitants of Teneriffe and other Canaries," Herbert observes that "the rude and primitive virtues of this race are somewhat tempered by the softer and more voluptuous genius of Andalusia" (263–64), then predictably goes on to describe the exotic appeal of Havana's ethnically mixed women: "at their balls and *tertulias*, in their splendid Parisian dresses," "forms . . . bewitching from their Asiatic fulness," "charming in spite of the duskiness of their complexions" (264). The variant of the Spanish language that they speak also bears the signs of peoples "intermingled": the "dialect of the stately Dons," "transplanted to the delicious climate of Cuba," has "acquired an Ionic softness and volume" and "mellowed." The "Castilian tongue" now manifests an abundance

of “polysyllabic superlatives and . . . musical diminutives” that, in what Herbert appears to view as an appealing sort of degeneration, “have added to its grace what they have taken from its energy” (264).

No sooner has Herbert described the evolving Cuban culture borne of contacts between races and languages than his tone shifts from the documentary to the intensely personal: “I grew uneasy at the idea of remaining in Havana,” he confides. “I was haunted by a continual fear that I should *coger un aire*, by which phrase the people mean the contracting of half a dozen strange disorders peculiar to the hotter parts of the West Indies” (264). Afraid of contamination in Havana, he flees to a coffee plantation in the countryside, where he is indeed seized by another kind of *aire*, a tale once whispered among the inhabitants of the island and now passed on to Herbert by his host, the Counsellor Benzon. Even before the tale is told, the initial contact between Herbert and Benzon threatens the “contagious” possibilities of slave revolt. Herbert is obviously invested in establishing Benzon’s steadfast control as slaveowner, noting the “powerful frame” he shares with his “countrymen,” and the “great awe” in which “[h]is negroes held him,” “one of those men . . . obeyed by inferior minds” (266). Yet as Herbert contemplates the overwhelming “colored population of the island,” he is compelled one day to ask, “Are you not afraid . . . that they will rise up in a body against their masters and make a bloody attempt to shake off the burden of servitude?” (267). The question posed by the Anglo-American visitor to his Cuban host suggests again the inextricability of US interests from West Indian slavery; hanging heavy across their conversation, the shadow of Saint-Domingue unites the two men, and their respective slaveholding economies, in mutual apprehension.

Benzon, however, is quick to disavow this. “I have no such fears,” he responds unequivocally, arguing that the “different classes of our colored population hate each other too cordially” to conspire in rebellion (267). Yet Benzon cannot entirely escape the specter of revolt, and the particular manifestation of his inability to do so links the fraught colonial histories of Cuba and the United States irrevocably: “Not many years since, three Indians, from the coast of Florida, did what all the blacks of the island never did, and I believe and trust will never do – they filled the whole country for nearly three years with robbery, bloodshed, burnings, and consternation” (267). Set in 1807, Benzon’s story is embedded in a Spanish territory that will be ceded to the United States in 1820, nearly ten years before the publication of the larger “A Story of the Island of Cuba” in which the tale occurs. Florida thus creates a kind of temporal and geographic interstice within the larger narrative, suggesting that Herbert’s question about

the possibility of insurrection in Cuba can be explored fully only with reference to the United States.

Appropriately, then, Benzon's tale moves from Florida to a Cuban borderland, the settlement of Guanes lying at its "remotest boundary" (270). In Guanes arrive the three Floridian Indians, having escaped a jail in Havana, and there they "contrive . . . to exchange their prison dresses for . . . the usual garb of the country people"; they assimilate, and live "in a manner quite to their taste among the lazy settlers" (271). But if the Indians find Guanes to their liking, Benzon does not: the inhabitants "once stole from me the finest horse in the world, an English hunter," he complains. "I was obliged to pursue my journey on a stunted, hard-trotting jade, which I purchased of a dingy mulatto, who called himself a white man." Within Herbert's frame tale, this substitution of the English hunter for a lesser breed resonates peculiarly with Benzon's parallel description of its Cuban owner, the "dingy mulatto" passing for white in a region of fluid boundaries that is both ideal for the displaced Indians and a source of anxiety for the plantation owner. "No part of Cuba," he concludes, "is peopled with a worse race" (270).

The premise of Benzon's tale is a failed civilizing mission undertaken by a Cuban bishop who has brought the three Indians from Florida to be "instructed in the learning of the white man" (268). Entirely unlike Bryant's poetic Indians, safely extinct or disappearing but always admirable – and unlike the romanticized Indians of the nineteenth-century Cuban *leyenda*, noble and tragically vulnerable to the brutal conquistadors – these three "young savages" from Florida exist in recent memory – "[n]ot many years since" – and serve primarily to illustrate the disastrous consequences of the project of assimilation: "lazy, proud, intractable," "heathenish," seemingly invulnerable, and unmistakably dangerous, they break the law and escape from jail to Guanes (268–69). In this way, they have much in common with the indigenous Americans whom Bryant constructed and condemned in his *Evening Post* editorials supporting Andrew Jackson's 1830 Indian Removal Bill – a political moment that coincided with a sharp decline in the popular poetic production of the Indian poetry for which he had become known.⁵² The US Congress passed the Removal Bill the year after "A Story of the Island of Cuba" was published, and in the following years Bryant would abandon the subject of Indians almost entirely in his verse. In a sense, then, Bryant performed what we might call his own literary removal project through his tale, displacing the Indians of his early poetic years to Cuba, where, far from the "noble race" he had earlier celebrated, they soon kill and torture their way across the countryside.

Yet Benzon's tale cultivates a deliberate ambiguity surrounding the atrocities the Indians allegedly commit. Though the "greater number" of Cubans believe the three Indians are indeed responsible for the butchery of many men, women, and children, there are some who suggest that the murders are committed by "a party of wreckers from the keys," and still others who contend that an "invading force" has taken the island, "sending out small detachments to ravage the country" (274–76). Even after the responsibility of the Indians is "confirmed" by new reports from escaped victims, the story continues to generate doubt by linking the islanders' belief in the "savages" to their belief in the supernatural: "Wild stories were told of their exploits; of their gigantic strength and prodigious swiftness . . . of the supernatural suddenness with which they came upon the defenseless"; of their "demoniac expression," their "league with the powers of darkness," their ability to travel from one coast to the other in the span of a day (274–75). "They passed from place to place," Benzon summarizes, "as mutely and rapidly as ghosts of the dead" (277).

Beneath this rhetoric of the occult, the tale reveals, lies a larger cultural anxiety. To the islanders, the Indians are indeed "ghosts of the dead," specters of the indigenous inhabitants of Cuba, long disappeared after their brutal enslavement on the *encomiendas* and their contact with the contagious diseases brought by European settlers. The three Indians are thus said to have visited a remarkable cave near Cape San Antonio featuring several chiseled rooms, "the work of the ancient inhabitants of the country," where the three have "propitiated the devil . . . and received the gift of irresistible strength and the power of transporting themselves in a moment to whatever place they pleased" (277–78). Though Benzon himself claims to doubt this particular rumor, its significance is clear: the Floridian Indians who now ravage the island not only evoke the now-extinct indigenous peoples of Cuba in the imaginations of the island's contemporary population, but appear as well to avenge the historical crimes committed long ago against those "ancient inhabitants." Marginal characters who have no official place in either the United States or the Spanish colony or the Florida borderland between the two, the Indians confound the colonial representatives, who can surmise only that "they were not ancient inhabitants of the place [yet] could show a passport from no other" (272).

Ultimately, of course, the three Indians must be captured and killed. As the question that initially prompts the narrative makes clear – "Are you not afraid . . . that they will rise up in a body against their masters and make a bloody attempt to shake off the burden of servitude?" – the ideological work of Benzon's tale is to imagine and control through the figures of the Indians

the possibility of slave revolt on the island. The narrative preservation of Indians thus works simultaneously as a form of containment, the closure attending their gory deaths exorcising the transamerican specter of slave insurrection for both the Cuban teller and his US scribe. The resulting text seeks to preserve in letters the sensibility of its oral origin, insisting throughout that the Indians themselves have no access to written forms of literature, to the creation of their own textual memorials. Indeed, their apparent failure to be "instructed in the learning of the white man" proves for Benzon to be as much an explanation of their future imprisonment as his allegation of "some offense [committed] against the laws" – "What it was," he concludes vaguely, "I either never heard or have forgotten" (268–69). What he recalls clearly, on the other hand, is that the young Indians "could by no means be taught the alphabet" (269).

In the absence of literary production, the bodies of the Indians serve instead the memorial function in which "A Story of the Island of Cuba" itself participates. The deaths of the first two at the hands of their colonial pursuers provide the entire search party with "an opportunity of examining at leisure" the "exceedingly muscular" forms of the mysterious insurrectionists (282). After various physical "peculiarities" lead to the conclusion that they "evidently belonged to the Indian race," their heads are cut off and sent to the Captain-General at Havana, their "quarters . . . suspended by the highways; and their enormous lances, their bows, arrows, and javelins . . . preserved, for a memorial of the exploit, in the houses of those who led the expedition against them" (282–83). The death of the third Indian some weeks later yields a still more spectacular bodily memorial. The mountainous site of his fallen corpse is renamed Loma del Indio (Indian Hill); the body itself is returned to Puerto Príncipe and "exposed in the principal square of the city," where "multitudes, of all ages, sexes, and ranks, carrying lanterns, torches, and candles, crowded to look" (294).

Benzon himself witnessed the spectacle, he explains, and the "impression that sight made upon [him] still remains as vivid as on that night": the "low stature" of the body, "shoulders of uncommon breadth, a large head covered with coal-black hair . . . round, prominent, and glaring eyes, high-arched eyebrows, a hooked nose, a brawny neck, large, muscular arms and legs, feet and hands as delicately formed as those of the ladies of our own nation" (294–95). But even after the Indian's body is "ordered to be hung in the public square, and to be drawn and quartered" upon a gibbet, this itinerant figure retains a certain power over the imaginations of the Cuban spectators. When the gibbet's pulley gives way, the fallen body drives the "multitudes," "not yet cured of the superstitious belief of the connection of the Indian

with the powers of darkness,” to “recoil . . . with shrieks and groans,” falling “in heaps upon each other.” Only the final dismemberment of the body – “the legs and hands set up in the public ways, and the head enclosed in an iron cage and fixed upon a pole” – appears to leave “the country delivered forever from . . . fear” (295).

Such descriptions of bodily desecration and hints of occult power are easily understood in relation to the story’s commercial context within *The Talisman*, conceived originally as a short-order project that would be a popular hit in the Christmas book trade;⁵³ the story has all the tried and true appeal for US readers of exoticism and horror in a comfortably remote setting. Yet Bryant clearly complicates this appeal from the beginning of the story, when Benzon specifies that the Cuban insurrectionists are in fact North American Indians. The narrative that surrounds these traveling figures suggests that such stories can never be entirely contained or quarantined – indeed, that they are as contagious as the virulent “*aire*” that Herbert flees Havana to avoid. By the end of the tale, Benzon has decided that he “ought not to conceal” from Herbert that some believe the Indians to be not from Florida but from “the tribe of Guachmangos, a fierce, untamable nation of Mexico.” By “some unknown means,” he concludes, “they had found their way to the island” (296). The tale of the Indians cannot be restricted even to the lines of migration between Florida and Cuba, Cuba and the northeastern home of Herbert; locating its anxieties in Mexico as well, “A Story of the Island of Cuba” exemplifies a larger point about transamerican literary relations in the nineteenth century: that narrative transmission across national, cultural, and linguistic borders carries with it unspoken cultural anxieties that demand authorial mediation and revisionary containment. The tensions between Bryant’s Anglo and Cuban narrators constitute the most obvious response to such demands; only after Herbert verifies to his own satisfaction the details of Benzon’s narrative does he deem the story, in the text’s final line, “a matter of history” (296).

It goes almost without saying that the “matter of history” evoked in the torturous defilement of the Indian bodies was more relevant to the contemporaneous United States than to mid-nineteenth-century Cuba, where there was no longer an indigenous population. Bryant’s grasp of the relationship between literature and history had always been a slippery one; in 1821, at the height of his poetic fascination with Indians, he wrote to the notable editor and critic Richard Henry Dana, Sr. (father of the popular author of *To Cuba and Back*) that “the very mention of them once made [him] sick – perhaps because those who took to make a poetical use of [Indians] made such a terrible butchery of the subject.”⁵⁴ For Bryant,

there existed a certain metaphoric slippage between “poetical” and historical “butchery,” as if the literary text itself might engage in removals even as it wrought aesthetic chaos. Confiding in Dana not only as the founder of the *North American Review*, the journal that had first published his budding literary efforts, but also as his friend and mentor, Bryant thus hinted at his own future enactment of literary manifest destiny, the ideology that would pervade the northeastern intellectual circles in which he reigned, giving cultural shape to the beginnings of US imperialism in the Americas.⁵⁵

If the decades following the publication of “A Story of the Island of Cuba” saw the rise of increasing US investment in the colony’s national fate in a political atmosphere rife with both international abolitionist commitment and the possibility of slave revolt, the notorious 1844 discovery of the Escalera brought the imbrication of literature and politics to the foreground when the reformist literary circle centered around Domingo del Monte was accused of fomenting the planned revolt.⁵⁶ Though the extent of del Monte’s involvement in the conspiracy remains debatable, the role that literary efforts would play in the future of Cuba, Caribbean slavery, and US expansionism was not lost on US intellectuals. A *Democratic Review* article advocating the annexation of Texas, for example, made extensive reference to the Escalera conspiracy and its possible influence in the United States, ominously figuring the British Consul David Turnbull as “a writer of *known* ability and a decided abolitionist.” Turnbull’s “offensive actions” were threatening to the United States, the article implied, largely because colonial censors had prevented the appropriate dissemination of the facts, leaving North American newspapers and journals with an inadequate understanding of the conspiracy.⁵⁷ Through the remainder of the decade, literary-political alliances converged to serve the project of Cuban annexation as well. Chief among these was a friendship between the editor of the *Democratic Review* itself, John L. O’Sullivan, who had famously coined the phrase “Manifest Destiny,” and Narciso López, a Venezuelan-born former officer in the Spanish army who became a staunch supporter of Cuban annexation, launching three unsuccessful military campaigns to liberate Cuba from Spain in 1848, 1849, and 1851 – all of them originating in the United States and comprised almost entirely of US citizens.⁵⁸ According to a later account, the flag that was carried by the “Liberating Expedition,” which never reached its intended destination in Havana, was delivered after López’s death not to any of the Cuban patriots residing in New York or Philadelphia but to O’Sullivan, for safekeeping into the future.

It was just one year after López’s first expedition, in April 1849, that Bryant had temporarily suspended his duties as editor of the New York

Evening Post and traveled to Cuba for the first time. Though the national poet finds that his “expectations of the scenery of the island of Cuba and of the magnificence of its vegetation” – described with such an air of authority in his own story – are “not quite . . . fulfilled,” his letters to the *Evening Post* during this trip register much of the earlier narrative’s concern with the intimacy that bound the United States with the Spanish colony through the institution of slavery.⁵⁹ In an April 18 letter to his newspaper, Bryant describes in great detail a sugar estate near Matanzas belonging to a planter from the United States; though he refrains from quoting his host on any topic, the economic and political inextricability of Cuba and its neighbor to the north is clear. In his following letter to the *Evening Post*, four days later, Bryant ends the account of his travels on the topic of “the annexation of Cuba to our confederacy.” Carefully neutral before his reading public, the traveling editor-in-chief observes simply that, if annexation were to occur, Cuban slaves would no longer be able to purchase their own freedom as they could under colonial Cuban law – a governmental policy that Bryant saw as “favor[ing] emancipation.”⁶⁰ At the same time, Bryant reports, the Cuban government still turned a blind eye to the illegal importation of slaves from Africa, outlawed through an international treaty between Spain and England in 1817 and again in 1835. Witnessing himself a group of newly captured African slaves at work on a Matanzas quay, Bryant soon learns from a whip-wielding overseer that the international trade continues “[p]úblicamente, Señor, públicamente.” “Of course, if Cuba were to be annexed to the United States,” Bryant concludes, “the slave trade with Africa would cease to be carried on as now.”⁶¹

The author’s solemn prediction of a righteous end to this illicit practice under US auspices is belied, however, by historical evidence showing not only that significant numbers of Africans were illegally brought to US shores after the international trade had been abolished, but also that the United States continued to thwart international regulations by offering cover under its flag to Cuban slave ships.⁶² Nor did all nineteenth-century authors share Bryant’s confidence in such untroubled US cooperation with the ban on the international slave trade. As we saw in the previous chapter, the Martiniquian editor Cyrille Bisette publicized the flouting of these international laws in the pages of the *Revue des Colonies* during the 1830s and 1840s, as did the African American writer and political scientist Martin Delaney in *Blake*, his mid-century novel of cultural and political crossings between Cuba and the United States.⁶³ Fascinated by similar human and literary traversals, and publicly opposed to slavery throughout his career, Bryant was nevertheless unable to imagine US complicity in the very

triangular trade that so firmly established itself at the center of economic power within the Americas – and in turn enabled the acts of literary and economic transmission inspiring his own Cuban story.

CIRILO VILLAYERDE, CUBA'S LITERARY FATE, AND THE US
MACHINERY OF SLAVERY

Within a writing career that encompassed some of Bryant's own most productive decades, the Cuban novelist Cirilo Villaverde offers a compelling example of how a nineteenth-century Cuban view might unsettle many of the transamerican perspectives that shaped this period of US literary history. Villaverde had a special vantage point onto Cuban-US relations given his long residency in the United States as a political exile, from 1849, the year of Bryant's first trip to Cuba, until his death in 1894. In the intervening years, during which he returned to Cuba only twice, Villaverde completed and published what would become his best-known work, the classic antislavery novel *Cecilia Valdés o La loma del Angel*. Though *Cecilia Valdés* was not released until 1879 by the Spanish-language publisher El espejo in New York, Villaverde's preface to the novel explains that he had begun the narrative during the years before his long exile. A first volume of the novel was published in Cuba in 1839, after which the young author spent time teaching and working on other literary projects rather than completing the second volume. Then, as Villaverde explains in the preface, "At some hour after midnight on the 20th of October, 1848, I was surprised, while in bed, and arrested . . . by the order of the Captain-General of the island": "Shut up like a wild beast in a dark, damp dungeon . . . then tried and condemned to the penitentiary by the Permanent Military Commission as a conspirator against the Spanish Crown," the author succeeded some six months later in escaping to the United States.⁶⁴ As both his preface and the ensuing narrative make clear, the ostensibly neutral and urbane internationalism of nineteenth-century US writers and travelers such as Bryant had entirely different origins, political implications, and potential consequences than the literary transnationalism of contemporaneous Cuban authors upon whom the exigencies of foreign publication, exile, and often imprisonment weighed heavily. Claiming in the preface not to have read a single novel in the more than thirty years he has spent in the United States – and indeed to have "exchanged [his] literary tastes for higher thoughts" and "militant politics" – Villaverde addresses *Cecilia Valdés* in part to the problems of Cuban national and literary independence during a period of increased US interest in the annexation of the island.

Central to Villaverde's self-consciousness of the perilous state of Cuban literary independence in *Cecilia Valdés* is the novel's attention to the repressive Spanish colonial system of censorship that conjoined nineteenth-century Cuban literary and political interests with those of the United States. Having overseen the publication of all literature related to the Americas since the sixteenth century, colonial Cuban legislation tightened its restrictions in the early nineteenth-century decades during which *Cecilia Valdés* unfolds. Littered throughout the novel are titles and extracts from newspapers and periodicals that testify through their very inconsequentiality to the effects of censorship; the narrator repeatedly calls attention to the documents, which offer a continual reminder that the parameters of the available news and political commentary never extend beyond the world of fashion, the occasional outbreak of cholera in Poland, and the ads for fugitive slaves that crowd the pages of the *Diario de la Habana*.

But if *Cecilia Valdés* invokes the publishing restrictions that were imposed with particular severity during the 1820s and 1830s, it also explores the ways in which these conditions effectively affiliated Cuban writers by definition with lands outside the colony, particularly the United States.⁶⁵ In some of its most crucial scenes, the novel provides careful documentation of the many nineteenth-century Cuban writers who lived, wrote, and published in the United States, or who visited there extensively en route to other places of exile in the Americas: José Antonio Saco and José de la Luz y Caballero, José María Heredia and Félix Varela. As we saw in Chapter Two, the exigencies of exile make the question of national identity a slippery one for the writing of national literary histories – a phenomenon made especially clear by the recent inclusion of numerous writers traditionally claimed within Cuban literary histories in the first volume of the series devoted to (and titled) *Recovering the US Hispanic Literary Heritage*. Thus, as Rodrigo Lazo has recently argued, a work such as *Cecilia Valdés* must be considered not only as the classic Cuban nationalist narrative of the nineteenth century, but also as a novel “emerg[ing] in part from a network of publishing efforts that developed in the United States . . . in response to and in conjunction with Cuban anticolonial politics.”⁶⁶ Yet even Plácido and the poet Juan Francisco Manzano, neither of whom ever lived or traveled outside Cuba, haunted the nineteenth-century US literary imagination in a number of unpredictable ways, appropriated by other writers in the service of particular arguments about Cuban-US relations.⁶⁷

For Villaverde, the fate of Cuban literary transmission could not be understood apart from this threat from the North. As Lazo has observed, the years separating the first volume's publication from that of the final,

complete edition of *Cecilia Valdés* also mark an evolution in Villaverde's political orientation from a proslavery to an abolitionist position – and, perhaps more significantly, from a stance in favor of US annexation to a strong position against it.⁶⁸ In fact, Villaverde's initial arrest in Cuba was a result of his participation in López's 1848 filibustering expedition. The Cuban author became López's military secretary after his escape to the United States; and over the course of López's subsequent expeditions to liberate Cuba from Spain, Villaverde continued fully to support the potential US annexation of the colony. In the preface to *Cecilia Valdés*, Villaverde refers to his "very active and exciting life" working for López, until his death in 1851, praising the general as "the illustrious head of our revolutionary movement" (14). Yet the novel itself explores a profound shift in Villaverde's understanding of Cuban-US relations. Upon his arrival in the United States in 1849, Villaverde had been cited more than once in the *Democratic Review* as a "Cuban patriot" and an advocate of annexation. An active member of the proannexation, New York-based Consejo de Gobierno Cubano – a group devoted to the interests of Cuban planters and property-owners whose founder, Cristobal Madán, was married to the sister of John L. O'Sullivan – Villaverde had written much in favor of the US annexation of Cuba, including a public refutation of the antiannexationist position of his colleague Saco. In the pages of *Cecilia Valdés*, however, Villaverde summons Saco back in time to Cuba and pays a kind of reconciliatory homage to his former opponent, documenting the importance of his writings on the 1825 revolutions of Mexico and Colombia, his "political and critical polemic" in defense of the patriotic poet Heredia, and the fact that Saco "doubtless played no small part" in the eloquent and inspired lectures given by his colleague José Agustín Govantes on the history of slavery, from ancient Rome to nineteenth-century Cuba.

Villaverde's reference to Saco's writings on the revolutions of Mexico and Colombia is especially significant given the importance of the year 1825 to the novel's critique of the United States as a long-standing hindrance to Cuban independence – a threat whose duration reaches back, in the novel's historical memory, to the moment of the Congress of Panama. This memory is first registered by the narrator simply as "a rumour to the effect that the Washington government had opposed the invasion of Cuba and Puerto Rico by Mexican and Colombian troops and that, as a result, the emissaries of the insurgents had been seized and hanged at Puerto Príncipe in 1826" (114). By the middle of the novel, however, referring again to "the victory of Bolívar at Ayacucho" – when "a delegation of Cubans met with him, and plans were formed for the liberation of Cuba and Spain's other colonies in

the two Antilles” – the narrator this time contends in no uncertain terms, “[it] is clear that without the officious intervention of the United States in 1826, the invasion would have been effected,” ringing “the death knell over Spain’s dominion in the new world” (229).

Rumor and unqualified narrative assertion thus combine to expose the underside of purported US enthusiasm for Spanish American independence in 1825: behind the public avowals of hemispheric solidarity in the name of democratic republicanism lay an economic and political trajectory already shaped by slavery. As we saw in the Prologue, one of the main purposes defined in the agenda of the 1826 Congress of Panama was a cooperative inter-American effort to liberate Cuba and Puerto Rico from Spain. Yet even Henry Clay, the most ardent of pan-Americanists and promoters of US participation at the Congress of Panama, opposed the liberation of the two remaining Spanish colonies while celebrating the new independence of Mexico and South America: “This country prefers that Cuba and Porto Rico should remain dependent on Spain,” he advised in an official House document addressed to the US Minister to Spain. “The population itself of the island is incompetent at present, from its composition and amount, to maintain self-government.”⁶⁹ Clay’s reference to composition and amount was of course an observation of Cuba’s large proportion of slave and free colored classes vis-à-vis its comparatively small white Creole population – a set of racial demographics that recalled St. Domingo and, as Clay warned, “might bring about a renewal of those shocking scenes, of which a neighboring island was the afflicted theatre.”⁷⁰ Any “protracted war” of Cuban independence might thus “bring upon the government of the United States, duties and obligations, the performance of which, however painful it should be, they may not be at liberty to decline.”⁷¹

Yet within four years of the Congress of Panama, President Martin Van Buren would make the reasons for US opposition to Cuban independence more explicit still: “Other considerations connected with a certain class of our population, make it the interest of the southern section of the Union that no attempt should be made in that island to throw off the yoke of Spanish independence, the first effect of which would be the sudden emancipation of a numerous slave population, the result of which could not be very sensibly felt upon the adjacent shores of the United States.”⁷² US politicians and diplomats were thus acutely aware of the intentions of Mexico and Colombia in seeking to liberate Cuba and Puerto Rico from Spain. The Congress of Panama, at which no US representative was in attendance, had explicitly prohibited the slave trade in the twenty-seventh article of its constitution. The new Spanish-American republics lost little

time in abolishing slavery within their own lands. Even more pressing upon US fears than the possibility of a St.-Domingo-style slave revolt in Cuba was the nearly certain abolition of slavery within an economy in which its own economic energies – both southern and northern, slaveholding and free – were fully enmeshed.

This state of symbiosis was not lost on Villaverde. In the fourth chapter of volume three, *Cecilia Valdés* again interweaves the United States into its narrative of nineteenth-century Cuban life and history, this time with an explicit focus on Cuba's plantation economy. Set in "a truly superb sugar plantation" called La Tinaja, the chapter opens with an epigraph taken from Villaverde's colleague José de la Luz y Caballero, who had been exiled from Cuba for his political criticism: "The blackest part of slavery is not the Negro" (369). The narrative makes immediately clear that a significant contributing factor both to the "truly superb" status of La Tinaja in particular, and to the "blackest part of slavery" in Cuba more generally, is its tie to the United States – represented in the chapter's first sentence in a technology designed to increase the productivity of the slave-driven plantation: "a steam engine which developed as much as 25 horsepower, recently imported from the United States at a cost of more than \$20,000, not counting the horizontal sugar mill installed on the premises, which had cost one half of that sum" (369). Citing the precise sums that foreground the crude economic nature of US implication within the slave-dependent Cuban sugar industry, the chapter reinforces its point by literalizing this US presence in the form of the steam engine's machinist, "a young American" "who spoke no Spanish, having recently arrived from the United States in the iron-clad *Maine*" (370, 410). If the machinist's monolingualism suggests a lack of true cultural exchange underpinning Cuban-US relations – or the purely economic base-reality that put the lie to US avowals of hemispheric liberty in 1826 – the specific details of the narrator's description of his function suggest an even more pointed observation of US complicity in the harsh realities of Cuban slavery: he "went with the long-necked oilcan and pothook in his hand from the sugar mill to the engine and back again, applying oil to the bearings and the axle, to reduce friction, a fatal cause of lack of power" (410). If the machinery of this particular slave plantation comes by way of the United States, so too, the novel comes close to suggesting, with Cuba's slave economy more generally: the United States provides both the figurative machinery of the transnational slave system and the lubricating process that keeps it running smoothly.

The US machinery of slavery pervades even the convoluted colonial Cuban genealogy that is the novel's primary subject. Unbeknownst to the

eponymous Cecilia, she is in fact the half-sister of her lover – in other words, the illegitimate and unrecognized daughter of Leonardo's prominent father, Don Candido Gamboa – the owner of La Tinaja as well as another slave plantation, but whose primary fortune depends upon trade with the United States. Within the Gamboa family history, moreover, the slave María de Regla has been forced to nurse Adela, one of the master's legitimate children, at the expense of her own, a fate she accepts until she begins to compare the state of her own infant, thin and sickly, with that of the white Gamboa daughter, "healthy, rosy, roly-poly," and "sleeping in a mahogany cradle that the Master had ordered from *El Norte*," the United States (449). María feeds her own dark child from her breast in secret, even as she has previously nursed in secret the illegitimate Gamboa daughter, Cecilia Valdés, who is also not white. But then again, neither are the legitimate Gamboas themselves precisely white: Don Candido may be a Spaniard, but his Cuban-born children are Creoles and effectively, by definition, without the "guarantee . . . of pure Spanish blood" (85). Revolution in this colonial society would thus pit father against son in a kind of Oedipal rivalry as surely as it would incur the wrath of Cuba's northern neighbor, a threatening and not so distant relative within the larger slaveholding family of the Americas.

Within these intertwined familial structures, clearly shaped within the narrative by the looming presence of the United States, the novel posits an examination of what it casts as the largely futile possibilities of literary discourse emerging from Cuba's state of Oedipal coloniality. Don Candido's son, Leonardo Gamboa, is the novel's symbolic failed writer, the object of all his family's – and by extension the colony's – literary aspirations. He has "acquired the habit of composing verses" and will "occasionally write some insignificant article for the *Diario de la Habana* and other periodicals." Yet Leonardo does not show "the slightest aptitude for the literary career for which they were preparing him"; even his own ambitious father recognizes that the Creole son will "never be a shining light as a man of letters" (127–28). As the novel suggests, Leonardo's lack of literary aptitude stems largely from his dependence on his father's US-driven money. Relying instead "on his parents' death to make him a rich man," Leonardo displays even "less ambition than talent," and entertains "no hope of accomplishing anything by his own industry or effort, his studies or his mental gifts" (128). Instead, he awaits his inheritance of the profits made from an importing business that distributes lumber from "*El Norte*" throughout Cuba, where it will become, among other things, a source of paper – though not worth a centavo, claims the mulatto tailor Uribe, when inscribed with "a white man's word" (147).

The United States thus presides distantly over the economic cycle of literary inconsequentiality in which Leonardo flounders indolently. But such inconsequentiality has, in fact, real consequences for those Cubans who occupy stations less privileged than Leonardo's – most of all, perhaps, for Cecilia. In the final pages of the narrative, Cecilia remarks that Leonardo is "a poor reader" (499); within a few pages of this telling observation, Leonardo himself begins to recognize the pervasive hypocrisy of his own literary coterie and the central irony of its complicity in the larger structure of colonial oppression. In a crucial scene of self-reflexive literary commentary, Leonardo learns that Cecilia has been imprisoned without due process of law simply because Don Candido wished her out of his son's life. Don Fernando de O'Reilly, the Alcalde mayor who orders her arrest, is also a self-described man of letters, a literary colleague of Leonardo's, who pretentiously misrecognizes in Leonardo's enraged posture the "moment of inspiration" in "a man who nurtures the soul of a poet." Don Fernando prattles on about his "Sketch of My Visit to Etna" in *El Diario* – which, he observes, has been published anonymously because of his official position as an Alcalde mayor, though the very title of the piece is laughably uncontroversial – even as in the next breath he admits to "knowingly commit[ing] an injustice," "an arbitrary act," in ordering Cecilia away to a shelter for indigent women. The scene emphasizes again the futility of Leonardo's career in literature as well as the novel's vision of a broader failure of Cuban literary independence that is represented through Don Fernando, suggesting that neither man's implication in Cecilia's fate, and by extension the fate of colonial Cuba, can be understood apart from the emptiness of his literary aspirations.

Villaverde would comment on these literary circumstances more explicitly in his *Autobiografías*. In a passage that proves strangely illuminating of Bryant's Cuban imaginary, Villaverde recalled the heavy impact of colonial censorship upon Cuban narrative during the 1830s and 1840s that he had explored obliquely in *Cecilia Valdés*:

I had of course come to understand that it was useless to attempt to publish anything in the novelistic genre in Cuba; it would be like writing a novel only to preserve it in manuscript form for a long, long time. I had no lack of material for novels. It was right around that time that I had copied the *Official Diary of a Runaway Slave Catcher*, which contained an inexhaustible store of bloody and tragic incidents in which slaves figured as the heroes . . . But in order to write that as a historic novel, I would have had to turn the runaway black slaves into Indians and transfer the scene of events to some place that had Indians, all of which was repugnant to my ideas on the novel whose local character I believe to be indispensable.⁷³

Working from his own as well as a broader nineteenth-century Cuban theory of the novel as a privileged national genre defined by realism and “local character,” Villaverde’s remarkable commentary illustrates again the very different and far more literal limitations faced by those Cuban writers who, like Bryant and other US contemporaries, sought to address issues of slavery and race. The particular elision that Villaverde finds so “repugnant” – a substitution of “Indians” for “black slaves,” and of “some place that had Indians” for a slaveholding colony where no indigenous population survived into the nineteenth century – cannot help but evoke the displacements structuring Bryant’s tale of Floridian Indians savaging the Cuban countryside and its lucrative sugar and coffee plantations.

Despite Villaverde’s long residence in the United States as not only a political activist but also a writer, there is no evidence to suggest that he was ever aware of Bryant’s story. Nevertheless, his account of literary substitutions lends an eerie resonance to the scene of execution that ends Bryant’s tale: the severed head of the violent Indian, prominently displayed for all to see, evokes the nearly identical decapitation and public presentation of the Cuban revolutionary José Antonio Aponte, the free black leader of the 1812 Aponte rebellion of Cuban slaves and free people of color. Aponte’s execution represents perhaps the most notorious of those precedents giving the historical lie to Benzon’s fervent denial that Cuban slaves could ever “rise up in a body against their masters and make a bloody attempt to shake off the burden of servitude.” Yet the strange synchronicity linking Villaverde’s commentary on slavery and literary displacement to Bryant’s tale of Indians revolting in Cuba may appear less uncanny than historically specific when we recall the suggestion of Bryant’s son-in-law that the author originally heard the story from a Cuban visitor while living with the Salazars in New York: in a sense, Villaverde’s observations tell us how to read Bryant’s tale for its rootedness in the Cuban milieu from which it was likely developed as well as for the transamerican historicity it can neither articulate nor know.

DOMINGO DEL MONTE AND ALEXANDER HILL EVERETT:
THE POLITICS OF CUBAN-US LITERARY EXCHANGE

In the early 1840s Alexander Hill Everett, a US politician and man of letters, and Domingo del Monte, the Cuban intellectual who would later be accused of fomenting the Escalera, exchanged a series of remarkable letters. Written in Spanish and yet to be translated into English, these obscure letters from del Monte to Everett have remained entirely unknown to US literary studies and are cited only incidentally in the literary historiography

of Cuba.⁷⁴ Yet, as I hope to show here, this extraordinary epistolary exchange documents the reception and circulation of a voluminous early nineteenth-century Cuban literature among the upper echelons of the US literary establishment during these years. The letters further suggest both the surprising extent of literary transmission between the republic and the island-colony and the ways in which literary affiliation often overlay political agenda. Everett had been one of the first evaluators of Bryant's earliest poem, "The Embargo," as well as a writer, a director of the *North American Review*, a US senator, and, in 1825, the US Minister to Spain who termed it "a settled point that the American government could not consent to any change in the political situation of Cuba other than one which should place it under the jurisdiction of the United States."⁷⁵ In 1840 Everett was sent by the Van Buren administration on a clandestine mission to Cuba to obtain information about the status of the colony and its potential as both a threatening presence and a desirable acquisition for the US government. There Everett met del Monte, who became an invaluable source of information about the history of the colony, its current political situation, and its intellectual scene.

Like Everett, del Monte was far more influential as an editor and general man of letters than as a writer in his own right. As the organizer of a famous *tertulia*, a literary salon known throughout Cuba for its reformist political positions, he mentored a generation of young Cuban writers during the 1830s and early 1840s, encouraging and even commissioning them to produce what have been called "antislavery" narratives as well as *costumbrista* prose, local-color writing intended to document a sensibility of *cubanidad* or cubanness and to lay the foundations of an authentic and original Cuban literature. In this sense, del Monte and his *tertulia* worked within and helped to shape a politico-literary discourse that Antonio Benítez Rojo has called "Cuba Pequeña," one that privileged local perspectives and folk culture, and thus inherently opposed the discourse of "Cuba Grande," which was focused on Cuba's place in foreign markets and marked by its support of and by Cuba's slave traffic and its sugar industry.⁷⁶ If historians and critics have disagreed widely over the exact nature of del Monte's ideological orientation and his ultimate effect on the literary productions emanating from the *tertulia*, he unquestionably played a crucial role in the development of Cuban literature during what has been described as the "boom" of the 1830s and early 1840s.

After their initial meeting in 1840, del Monte and Everett began an epistolary relationship that lasted over the next four years and ended only after Everett left New York to be Ambassador to China, where he died

within two years of his arrival. Through the course of this relationship between two cultural figures highly influential in their respective lands, their letters both recorded and participated in a large-scale exchange of Cuban and US literary production, including books, journals, newspapers, translations, and letters written by other writers. The first surviving letter, though brief, points immediately to a literary relationship between the two men that was already established during Everett's stay in Cuba. Written sometime before mid-May 1840, this undated letter from del Monte to Everett (who is still in Cuba at this time) accompanies two very differently presented literary items:

My esteemed sir and friend: I am sending you the 'Poesías' by Zorrilla that I promised you: this fecund poet has already published six volumes; but I am sending you no more than four because they are the only ones that we have in Cuba today . . . I am also sending you a copy of the best dramatic work that the Cuban talent has produced: its author is a young man, a native of Matanzas. These two works I hope you will have the goodness to accept as a souvenir of your short stay in Havana and of the esteem that you managed to inspire in one of its sons.

(Mi estimado Sor y amigo: remito á U. las "Poesías" de Zorrilla que le ofrecí: ha publicado ya este fecundo poeta 6 tomos: Po. no le mando á U. más que 4, porque son los únicos que tenemos hoy en la Habana . . . Remito á U. también un ejemplar de la mejor obra dramática que ha producido el ingenio Cubano: su autor es un joven, natural de Matanzas. Estas dos obras, espero que tenga U. la bondad de aceptarlas Pa. Recuerdo de su corta mansión en la Habana y de la estimación que supo inspirar en ella á uno de sus hijos.) (49)

The latter work was likely José Jacinto Milanés's *El conde Alarcos*, a play that del Monte elsewhere referred to as "the first writing in Cuba by a Cuban . . . in which genius is discovered" ("el primer escrito en Cuba por un cubano . . . en que se descubre ingenio").⁷⁷ Unnamed, however, the work is invoked here for its potential national significance, its anonymity lending it a representative quality with which del Monte wishes to acquaint his Anglo-American friend; as an exemplar of "Cuban genius," the name of the author is less important than the young man's status as "a native of Matanzas." The acclaimed Spanish poet José Zorrilla y Moral, on the other hand, seems to play a very different role here as well as in succeeding letters from del Monte to Everett: offering Zorrilla initially as a kind of recognizable calling card, del Monte praises the poet lavishly but then insistently proceeds to the subject of Cuban literature. Even in this first brief letter, del Monte appears to have an agenda beyond offering Everett a literary reminder of his Cuban trip, for he includes in his package of materials an additional item, which he mentions as if an afterthought, separate from the texts he

offers as gifts: "In the little tome titled 'Aguinaldo Habanero' you will see some verses by the slave of whom I spoke to you yesterday" (49).

The Cuban poet in question here is of course Juan Francisco Manzano, the former slave whose freedom del Monte had engineered four years earlier, in 1836, by taking up a collection among the members of his *tertulia* and commissioning Manzano to write a narrative of his life in bondage. The following year, in 1837, Manzano had published several of his poems in the literary magazine that del Monte now includes in his 1840 letter to Everett, the "Aguinaldo Habanero." Among the most famous of the verses Everett would receive in this journal is "Mis treinta años," later translated into English simply as "Thirty Years," a poem about the course of Manzano's life in slavery "[f]rom my childhood itself to this day." Here, Manzano compares the "terrors" he has already experienced with the horror of a known future in bondage: "But 'tis nothing the past . . . /When I think, oh, my God! on the chains, /That I know I'm yet destined to wear."⁷⁸ Del Monte's seemingly last-minute inclusion of Manzano's poetry among his materials for Everett in fact adumbrates the most crucial subject of the letters that ensue between the two writers: the question of slavery that links Cuba and the United States with a shared past, an economically interdependent present, and a future heavy with the possibility of annexation.

Del Monte's position relative to the questions of both slavery and annexation proves to be a slippery one. In the same year in which he first writes to Everett, del Monte also entrusts the autobiography he has commissioned from Manzano along with a collection of his poems to the British abolitionist Richard Robert Madden, who will publish them in London only a few months after del Monte's first letter to Everett, alongside several anonymous interviews on the subject of slavery in Cuba that Madden conducted with del Monte.⁷⁹ Yet del Monte says nothing in his letter about the upcoming publication or even the existence of Manzano's autobiography to Everett. Leaving Manzano's verse to speak for itself, del Monte waits to address slavery until later in their relationship of literary exchange, when he has learned more about Everett's political orientation relative to Cuba.

In his second letter to Everett, from May 1840, del Monte again introduces the subject of Zorrilla to open a doorway for Cuban-US literary relations, this time commenting favorably on the English translations that Everett has made of the poet. Del Monte contends that the translations have shown Everett to have "perfectly understood the thoughts of the young Spanish poet . . . and how to convert them to [his] native idiom with the concision and energy that are particular to the English language" – thereby congratulating Everett simultaneously on his Spanish comprehension and

translating abilities and on the cultural attributes ostensibly inherent in what he later calls “the virile character” of the English tongue (50, 52). Del Monte pairs these flattering pronouncements with reference to his “own poor writings,” but also the “good opinion” that Everett has apparently already formed of them; he reminds his Anglo-American acquaintance of “the honor that you bestowed upon me in wanting to copy my ‘Memoria on Primary Education on the Island of Cuba’ in order to publish it in the United States” (49–50). By his third letter to Everett, from the following month, del Monte has become bolder in his uses of the Spanish poet, sending the final two volumes of Zorrilla’s “Poesías” alongside a *folleto*, a pamphlet written by José Antonio Saco, the antiannexationist with whom Villaverde would later engage in public dispute, a member of the *tertulia* devoted to documenting the emerging national culture of Cuba, and the originator of the concept of *cubanidad* or Cubanness. The pamphlet in question was likely Saco’s 1832 essay *Brazil, Análisis por Don José Antonio Saco de una obra sobre Brasil, intitulada Noticias of Brazil in 1828 and 1829, by Rev. Walsh, author of a Journey from Constantinople, etc.*, which included a critique of Spanish colonialism and its continued participation in the international slave trade – a document that Benítez Rojo has located as marking the emergence of a literary discourse of Cuban nationalism.⁸⁰ In his letter to Everett, del Monte instructs his Anglo-American interlocutor to note in particular the last paragraph of Saco’s *folleto*, where he “will see that our compatriot never forgets to attack the clandestine traffic of Africans” (51). The Cuban author of the pamphlet is now ambiguously both del Monte’s compatriot and Everett’s, an insular as well as an inter-American colleague within a transnational literary network taking up common cause against the international slave trade – if not necessarily slavery’s domestic institutions.

As if treading here on perilous territory, del Monte shifts abruptly back to the more neutral European literary terrain occupied by Zorrilla, asking Everett next to make the Spanish poet “known in Boston,” where, he pauses to venture, “perhaps the señores Ticknor and Prescott have already taken notice of him” (51). Del Monte’s aside reveals the extent of the familiarity he already has with notable US men of letters: he is aware of George Ticknor and William Hickling Prescott as reputed hispanophiles, though neither the former’s *History of the Literature of Spain* (1849) nor the latter’s *History of the Conquest of Mexico* (1843) has yet been published. Moreover, del Monte clearly hopes that Everett will expand the parameters of the correspondence between them by bringing his letters and literary gifts to the attention of other US intellectuals. “Later on,” he tells Everett in the closing lines of the letter, “I will begin to send you the few productions of our provincial

Cuban literature, as well as my observations on its merit and the political and literary causes for its backwardness" (51).

Del Monte keeps good on part of this promise. The texts sent to Everett or brought to his attention over the course of their correspondence during the next four years include not only Manzano's poems and (most likely) Milanés's play, but also a panoply of other literary figures and institutions that effectively trace a narrative of early Cuban literary history. If this narrative is first signaled through the transmission of Saco's 1832 *folleto* and its articulation of an emergent, antislavery Cuban nationalism, it continues with del Monte's incorporation into his letters of José de la Luz y Caballero – a leading Creole intellectual involved in sponsoring literary nationalism in the early 1830s, who was eventually imprisoned on charges of involvement in the Escalera conspiracy – and the *Revista [bimestre] Cubana*, which had been presided over by Saco, Luz, and del Monte himself under the auspices of the Comisión de Literatura, overseen by the Sociedad Patriótica.⁸¹ When the three editors petitioned the Spanish government in 1833 to form a separate, independent Academia de Literatura Cubana, the colonial government promptly banished Saco and shut down the *Revista*, whose previous issues thus became the textual artifacts of what Benítez Rojo has termed "the first organized effort of Cuban intellectuals to mount a common front of resistance against the power of the slave-traders and the saccharocracy."⁸² The literary figures and incidents documented in del Monte's letters also include Ramón de Palma, author of the groundbreaking 1838 novella *Una Pascua en San Marcos*, which paved the way for the *tertulia's* subsequent focus on realism as a vehicle for social critique, as well as issues of the *Aguinaldo Habanero* and *El álbum*, periodicals that published the *costumbrista* fictions of Anselmo Suarez y Romero, best known for his sentimental antislavery novel *Francisco: El ingenio o Las delicias del campo*, which was published in New York; Milanés, poet and dramatist; and Villaverde, before his exile to the United States, among many others.

But if the writings of *costumbrismo* mark an early manifestation of Cuban literary nationalism, the literati covered in del Monte's correspondence with Everett nevertheless represent diverse ideological positions, ranging from Gaspar Betancourt Cisneros, who made his early reputation as a *costumbrista* writer in Cuba but had also been educated in the United States and later became a staunch annexationist; to Francisco de Arango y Parreño, an early advocate of unlimited slavery in Cuba who later became an abolitionist, proposing racial mixture as a means of dissipating the island's racially divided population;⁸³ to Arango's literary descendant in Santa Cruz y Montalvo, the Condesa de Merlin, whose three-volume travel work *La*

Havane (originally written and published in French in 1844 but republished the same year in Spanish as *Viaje a la Habana*) drew outraged charges of plagiarism from contemporaneous Cuban writers but also constituted what subsequent critics have called “the invisible touchstone of much Cuban literature,” which provided “an alternative model for an emerging Cuban nationalism”;⁸⁴ to Avellaneda, who wrote the preface for Merlin’s volumes, and whose novel *Sab*, a controversial tale of interracial love with a mulatto slave as its eponymous hero, was banned from the island throughout the nineteenth century. The narrative of early Cuban literary history emerging in del Monte’s letters also features the work of the celebrated poet Plácido, who would be executed during the fourth and last year of his correspondence with Everett during the 1844 explosion of the Escalera. The aftermath of the notorious antislavery conspiracy put a violent end to del Monte’s *tertulia* and to the literary period covered in this Cuban-US epistolary relationship.

In a political moment of intense colonial censorship that prevented the public dissemination of many of these writings in Cuba, del Monte thus effectively designed a conduit through Everett for the transmission of knowledge about these writings, and in some cases the writings themselves, within the United States. Indeed, del Monte’s letters perform in epistolary form a function somewhat akin to Villaverde’s metaliterary project in *Cecilia Valdés*, offering an anthology of Cuban literary history from the “boom” years contextualized by the wider political issues discussed by both del Monte and Everett throughout the letters. In this sense, the apologetic posture del Monte adopts in referencing these “provincial” works belies his definitive assertion of a Cuban literary tradition, one whose development he has largely overseen in the preceding decade and which he clearly intends to bring into US dialogues on the inextricable matters of literature, slavery, and ultimately annexation.

Everett’s letters to del Monte, on the other hand, are less concerned with introducing US literary history to his Cuban acquaintance than with acquiring a working knowledge of Cuban affairs suited to a particular political agenda. In a letter from February 12, 1842, Everett acknowledges the manuscript and the books that del Monte has sent him on loan, explaining that he has kept them in order to prepare an article on their content, and on del Monte specifically, that will appear in an upcoming issue of a new periodical, the *Southern Quarterly Review*. “I have not seen it yet,” Everett confesses of the journal, “but people speak well of its presentation and the general character of its works. If it has success, its result will be an important contribution to our literature” (54–55). In fact, as we have already seen, the

“general character” of the *Southern Quarterly Review* was decidedly proslavery and annexationist, propounding a vision of Cuba, in particular, as a rightful extension of the slaveholding US South. Thus Everett’s contribution of an article on Cuban writings to a journal that simultaneously strives to advance the cause of “our literature,” the national literature of the United States, enacts a kind of literary manifest destiny that resonates with that of Bryant’s *North American Review* coterie. Himself a northerner, Everett was nevertheless concerned with southern issues throughout much of his career, arguing against the popular northern opinion that the annexation of Texas would favorably contribute to the gradual disappearance of slavery throughout the slaveholding states, and that the “tranquility of the Southern States” should be respected throughout the Union.⁸⁵ On the question of Cuba, especially, southern interests weighed heavily, as Everett well understood. Announcing in his next letter to del Monte, from 16 September of the same year, that his Cuban piece has been completed and published, Everett requests new information from his acquaintance, this time on “the political history of Cuba since the opening of the doors of international trade.” Asking specifically for hard data, and cautioning del Monte to be careful and to use “great discretion,” Everett explains that, “in our country, we follow this question with special interest” (57–58). Everett thus links his own study of a Cuban intellectual and literary milieu with the specter of annexation, the “special interest” that the colony holds for the United States, particularly its slaveholding South.

The extent to which transamerican literary relations can prove indistinguishable from particular political agendas becomes even clearer as the US-Mexican conflict over Texas begins to influence Everett’s letters. A staunch supporter of expansion, Everett contributes for the September 1844 issue of the *Democratic Review* an article addressing (and entitled) “The Texas Question,” which details an argument for the incorporation of the disputed region. Throughout his polemic, Cuba figures peripherally but significantly in this matter: drawing a comparison between the recent events of the Escalera and the potential fomenting of revolt in Texas by “agents of the British Abolition societies,” Everett asks, “If such a state of things be fraught with alarm and danger to this country, even when it exists upon a neighboring island, inhabited by men of another race, in what light should we be compelled to regard it, if it were to grow up in a territory separated from ours only by a narrow river and an imaginary line, and inhabited by colonies of our own citizens?”⁸⁶ On September 12 of the same month, Everett sends his article off to del Monte accompanied by an earlier issue of the *Democratic Review* containing a piece on “Contemporary Spanish Poetry,” a subject

over which the two men have bonded through the course of the letters. If Zorrilla was del Monte's calling card for the introduction of a Cuban literary tradition in earlier letters, the nineteenth-century Spanish poet is now Everett's envoy for "la cuestión de Texas" and its potential relation to Cuba. Fittingly, Everett's article on Zorrilla ends with the prediction that, despite "all their brilliancy of talent and fertility of resources," obscurity will be "the destiny of the present race of Spanish poets, unless they learn to combine with their other gifts and talents, the art . . . of writing easy verses with difficulty."⁸⁷

The rhetoric surrounding this "race of Spanish poets" doomed to vanish, a group that cannot survive because its particular racial "gifts" do not assemble the appropriate qualities, enlists an obvious Anglo-Saxonism that links the seemingly unrelated piece of literary criticism to the matter of Texas annexation. The journal in which both articles appear thus proves an important resource for Everett in his letters to del Monte, providing an ideal venue for the coalescence of such topics as Texas and Spanish poetry into a discourse of literary expansionism. A year earlier, during del Monte's trip to the United States, Everett had sought in fact to arrange a meeting between del Monte and the *Democratic Review's* editor, John L. O'Sullivan, "one of the most erudite and estimable of men and one of the most able writers that we count among us" (94). Though the meeting apparently never took place, del Monte could not have failed to grasp the political motives behind Everett's ostensibly literary agenda in hoping to introduce him to the influential editor and promulgator of "Manifest Destiny."⁸⁸

Yet if del Monte never met O'Sullivan, his writing did in effect find a place in the *Democratic Review*. After repeated requests from del Monte to be discreet with the inflammatory materials that he had been sending to Everett in the United States, Everett excerpted, without permission, from del Monte's *Memoria* in a November 1844 article entitled "The Present State of Cuba." Everett introduces the *Memoria*, which includes highly critical descriptions of the colonial Cuban administration, as a document "recently . . . addressed to the Spanish government"; the text of the *Memoria*, translated as a "Memorial on the Present State of Cuba, Addressed to the Spanish Government by a Native of the Island," includes observations about an 1842 insurrection on the sugar plantation of Alcancia. In fact, however, del Monte had sent the *Memoria* to Everett four years earlier, in 1840 – and thus at least two years before the 1842 uprising in question. Everett has clearly taken liberties with his translation of del Monte's text, in other words – though this is the least of the potential problems it presented for del Monte as a document that was never intended for full public

consumption, and certainly not in 1844, the year of his increasingly dangerous position vis-à-vis the colonial administration.

On the subject of his appropriation without permission from del Monte, Everett appears somewhat cagey and inconsistent. In an August letter immediately preceding the publication of his article advocating the annexation of Texas, Everett tells del Monte that while writing the piece he was “tempted . . . to include some extracts from [your] letters” – “but in considering the critical circumstances in which you currently find yourself,” he writes, “it seemed to me more prudent not to allude to them” (124). By November, however, Everett appears less concerned with the potential effects of his writing on del Monte’s fragile status with the colonial government. The article presents del Monte’s *Memoria* only quasi-anonymously, observing that “the name of the author, who is one of the most intelligent and accomplished inhabitants of the colony, would add weight to his opinions” – but “we deem it improper, without his express permission, to place him personally before the public.”⁸⁹ A footnote on the second page of the article nevertheless directs readers to Everett’s review of del Monte’s “State of Education in Cuba” from the 1842 issue of the *Southern Quarterly Review* – an article that would immediately disclose del Monte’s identity as the author of the *Memoria* to any reader who chose to follow up on the reference.

Everett sends the Cuba article off to del Monte soon after its November publication, apparently indifferent to its possible consequences for his literary friend. “As you have perhaps observed,” remarks Everett casually of his emendations – which only heighten the *Memoria*’s inflammatory potential by updating its descriptions of the Cuban political situation – “I have lightly adapted some passages” from the *Memoria*, and have “inserted them with some preliminary commentaries . . . in the Democratic Review” (137). These “preliminary commentaries” are clearly designed to arouse the interest of US readers in annexation, though they are carefully presented as neutral observations: “The present state of the Island is too violent to be of long duration,” Everett explains. “What precise length of time it may last, and in what way it may terminate, are questions which we cannot here undertake to discuss. They are obviously, under every point of view, of deepening interest to the government and people of the United States; and deserve a greater share of attention than they have hitherto received from the public press.”⁹⁰ Everett’s incorporation of del Monte’s writing into the pages of the *Democratic Review* thus crystallizes a larger dynamic at work in his epistolary and literary exchanges with del Monte. While del Monte’s letters lay claim to a distinctive Cuban literature, Everett’s reveal the

coalescence of his literary and expansionist concerns. Though Everett's literary gaze is accordingly trained most often on Cuban writing rather than on his own comparatively well-established national literary tradition, he does make a point of bringing several US works to del Monte's attention, including both Cooper's "latest novel," which he sends as a gift at the outset of their correspondence, and Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico*, whose upcoming publication Everett announces throughout his letters. Seemingly disparate texts, the two works nevertheless reveal across their respective genres a thematic celebration of imperial power – a shared line of descent among the many transamerican genealogies of *Jicoténcal* discussed in Chapter Two.

While Everett's literary and political orientations are conflated through his overt desire for Cuba as "another brilliant star in the flag of our confederacy" (87), del Monte's uses of literature are more ambivalent. Not surprisingly, critics of Cuban literary history have varied widely in their understanding of del Monte's literary motives and of the literature about slavery produced under the auspices of his *tertulia*. On the one hand, del Monte commissioned several overtly antislavery works that would form an important strand within the Cuban literary tradition; on the other, critics have cautioned against oversimplifying del Monte's antislavery stance, noting that his family (as well as those of some of the members of his group) had economic investments in slavery that powerfully shaped his own gradualist position toward the idea of abolition.⁹¹ At the same time, descended from white Creole parents who had fled the incipient revolution in colonial Saint Domingue, del Monte often expressed fears that the existence of a nonwhite majority in Cuba would lead to a large-scale slave rebellion and the establishment of a "república etiópico-Cubana," or a Cuban version of Haiti, as he termed it in a letter to Everett (62); notoriously, he once suggested that his goal was first to end the slave trade, then to see the end of slavery, "quietly . . . without overthrows or violence," and finally "to cleanse Cuba of the African race."⁹² To complicate matters further, del Monte adopted conflicting positions when addressing audiences of different national and political orientations, from the colonial Spanish to the abolitionist English to his fellow Cuban Creoles. A master of discursive manipulation, he proved particularly acute in his deployment of overlapping literary and political appeals to Everett.

Indeed, as his letters to Everett proceed, del Monte consolidates their ostensible political mission through a rhetoric of transamerican literary affiliation and a broad knowledge of US literary culture, consistently playing upon Everett's sense of racial identity and his belief in a national manifest destiny even while advancing his own personal and political agenda. "Do

me the favor of sending my greetings, in Boston, to the senores Bancroft, Prescott, and Ticknor, and let me know if the second volume of the History of Mexico has been published yet," requests del Monte at the end of a November 1842 letter dedicated also to showing that "Cuba is the younger sister of the great Western Confederation of the Caucasian peoples of America" (62–63). If del Monte's familial metaphor here suggests both racial solidarity and an annexationist logic rooted in kinship, a later letter, from July 1843, warns darkly of threats posed to the "tranquility and security of the Island" by "the abolitionists from London" even as it asks Everett to introduce del Monte to his literary acquaintances in Philadelphia. Del Monte clearly hopes to gather a transamerican *tertulia* during his winter stay, and asks accordingly for "all the literary and biographical news emanating from the Athens of the North," where Everett resides. He seeks "to study and improve in the knowledge of the English language and literature – to be able to undertake, afterwards, that of the customs and institutions of your marvelous country" (68–69). By the next month, in his August 1843 letter, del Monte more explicitly ties together literary affiliation and political annexation, juxtaposing an argument linking emancipation positively to a Cuban union with the United States and a complimentary discussion of Longfellow, Irving, the *North American Review*, and the North American study of classical Spanish literature (74–75).

Yet such flattering appeals to Everett's literary status and his expansionist ambitions in fact served del Monte's own agenda, laying the groundwork for his future defense in the event of any trouble he might encounter with Spanish colonial authorities. This trouble came, of course, in the form of the Escalera. While his historical participation in planning any slave uprising is dubious given his fears of a latter-day Haiti, del Monte's response, in his subsequent letters to Everett, to the colonial government's accusations of fomenting the revolt foregrounds his willingness to revise both literary and personal history in an effort to curry support – at moments suggesting, even, that he had all along understood his letters to Everett as a form of documentation, a means of disproving any allegations of antislavery subversion.

For example, del Monte vehemently asserts in his June 1844 letter that he "never committed the cruel indiscretion" of including "people of color" in any sort of political discussion. Perhaps recalling here that he had four years earlier spoken to Everett about Juan Francisco Manzano and sent him some of Manzano's verses, del Monte hastens to add: "Although, I only dealt there, from that class, with the poet-chef Manzano, a man of gentle disposition, and extremely humble, and with whom I spoke only of verses

and pastries" (III-12). This description of a literary-culinary relationship is of course inaccurate, as del Monte had in fact arranged for the purchase of Manzano's freedom by having him read a poem about slavery before the *tertulia* and then taking up a collection on his behalf. More importantly, as we have seen, he induced Manzano to write his famous autobiography, a narrative that del Monte then passed on to the English abolitionist Madden specifically to document the case he would make against Cuban slavery back in England. In the same letter to Everett, del Monte also makes reference to Plácido, later arrested for allegedly leading the Escalera conspiracy: "To the other man of color, whom an English agent introduced to me one day in my house and whose name I don't remember, recommending him to me as an excellent metalworker, I did no more than recommend his labor and advise him to mistrust the self-interested friendship of this foreigner" (II2). Yet this, too, inaccurately describes del Monte's relationship to Plácido, who was in fact a frequent participant in the *tertulia* before his arrest.⁹³ What these deliberate deceptions imply, then, is that while del Monte sent Everett examples of Cuban literature accompanied by urgent warnings about English abolitionists on the island and the possibility of widespread slave revolt, he made very different uses of Cuban writing in the reformist context of his *tertulia*.

After the colonial government's accusations against him, del Monte fled to Paris, where he wrote to Everett in Boston for help: "My principal defense – all my defense – is on your hands" (107). Del Monte discusses various possible strategies that Everett might pursue, such as entreating Washington Irving to seek his rehabilitation before the Spanish government, before settling on his request that Everett contact the Argentine Creole Angel Calderón de la Barca – a diplomat in Washington and the husband of Frances Calderón de la Barca, author of the travel volume *Life in Mexico* (examined at length in the next chapter) that del Monte and Everett had previously discussed in their letters. Del Monte's proposal for his defense could not be more specific: reminding Everett that "by a happy coincidence" Calderón is the current Minister of Spain in Washington and also Everett's "illustrious friend," he asks Everett to show Calderón one of his own letters from two months earlier – which he dates to the month and exact day – as proof of his "true opinions" concerning abolition and the political situation in Cuba. The literary and political merge with devastating clarity when the author rather than the diplomat, Frances Calderón rather than her husband, responds to Everett's letter about del Monte and offers her help in the absence of her traveling spouse. Though del Monte is thrilled to hear from "the discreet Señora

de Calderón,” noting that “the influence that . . . she exercises upon the mind of her husband has given me much hope” (132), neither Calderón nor Everett proves able to improve del Monte’s situation with the colonial authorities. No longer playing to Everett’s literary investment in a national manifest destiny, del Monte made his way to Spain, where he began to write vigorously against annexation and the threat of an encroaching United States.

GERTRUDIS GÓMEZ DE AVELLANEDA AND THE RESISTANCE
OF MANIFEST DESTINY

If the epistolary exchange between del Monte and Everett sheds a clarifying light on the transamerican problematic in which much of Bryant’s oeuvre and career was implicated, a contemporaneous Cuban novel written outside the auspices of the del Monte *tertulia* challenges both versions of Cuban-US literary and political relations through an analysis of their consequences for Cuban women and slaves in particular. Destined to become one of the most celebrated writers of nineteenth-century Spain and Latin America, Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda published in 1841 her first and best-known novel, *Sab*, a romance of interracial love that implicitly explores the looming possibility of US annexation – and ultimately suggests a kind of response to the literary expansionism touted in Bryant’s intellectual circles.⁹⁴ From the opening chapters, *Sab* undertakes a thinly veiled critique of an “indolent” colonial patriarchy – “inactive by temperament, docile by character and the habit of inertia,” as the narrator describes Don Carlos, father to Carlota, the novel’s Cuban-born Creole heroine, its true “daughter of the tropics” (41, 147).⁹⁵ Not surprisingly, colonial censors banned the novel in Cuba, though a number of copies were secretly circulated on the island despite its interdiction; by the 1870s *Sab* had emerged again as anticolonial fodder, appearing serially in a Cuban revolutionary journal published from New York.⁹⁶ Obviously aware of the potential impact of her novel, Avellaneda herself claims in a foreword that she wrote the novel purely for “amusement” and never intended to publish it, though many details in the novel, as well as the explanatory notes that accompany it, suggest that she intended all along to introduce Cuba and its folk customs to a foreign readership. Indeed, Avellaneda ambiguously disavows the ideas in *Sab* as “somewhat different” from those she holds at present; at the same time, however, she acknowledges having opted not to change them – but declines to specify “whether out of laziness or our unwillingness to alter something we wrote with real conviction” (26).

The novel explores the political future of Cuba through the romantic fate of its heroine Carlota, loved secretly by her noble slave Sab, the novel's eponymous – and, to Cuba's colonial censors, scandalous – hero.⁹⁷ Sab stands apart from the other slaves in part because of his education, received from childhood at Carlota's side, and in part because he is unknowingly Carlota's first cousin, the illegitimate son of her uncle, Don Carlos's brother, who died long before the novel's action begins. Adoring Carlota respectfully from afar while protecting her every interest, Sab is clearly the novel's ideal lover and patriot – for Carlota embodies Cuba itself. Sab alone in the novel understands this; he “alternately glance[s] at the landscape and at [Carlota], as though he were comparing them,” comprehending “a certain harmony between the landscape and the woman, both so young and so beautiful” (71) – and, as del Monte, too, understood, so vulnerable to foreign interests. Thus the opening scene of the novel introduces Carlota's suitor Enrique Otway, an emigrant to Cuba whose “fair, rosy skin, blue eyes, and golden hair” cause the narrator to wonder “if . . . he had been born in some northern region” (27). Otway surveys the land surrounding Carlota's plantation with a trained eye, “savoring . . . the richly fertile earth of that privileged country” all the more because he is betrothed to marry the presumably also “rich” and “fertile” Cuban heiress. And though the novel casts him overtly as a “young Englishman,” Otway's implied identity as an Anglo-American constitutes the more pervasive threat posed to Carlota and, by extension, to Cuba.⁹⁸

In fact, as the narrative reveals by the third chapter, Otway's English father was an emigrant to the United States, where he was “for some years” a “peddler” before making his way to Cuba. There Otway's father became, as the narrator puts it with distaste, “one of those many men who swiftly rose from nothing, thanks to the riches of that new and fertile land.” By the time he settles in Puerto Príncipe, he has with him the six-year-old Enrique, Carlota's future suitor, born in all likelihood in the United States during his father's former peddling years. True to his national origins, the novel suggests, Otway has been “fully indoctrinated . . . by the commercial and speculating spirit of his father,” whose values represent those of Cuba's neighbor to the north, with its long-standing interest in the island's resources. Courting Carlota as Cuba itself, Otway is “not indifferent to her wealth”; drawn to her exotic “personal charms,” he has nevertheless no real interest in her future welfare other than its potential benefit to him. When he learns that Carlota's financial circumstances have changed, he is ready to betray her for a richer Cuban heiress in the name of what he calls his “destiny,” manifest indeed in the Cuban port he gazes upon: he will acquire

a fortune through the island and return to his national origin as “a wealthy businessman in New York or Philadelphia,” “known by the merchants of both hemispheres” (115). At the same time, as both Carlota’s father and the narrative’s representative of an ineffective colonial patriarchy, Don Carlos shares some of Otway’s father’s “commercial theories about matrimony,” and he views her marriage to the young Anglo-American accordingly as a chance to see his Cuban daughter’s “fortune assured” (42).

The novel’s view of Cuba’s fate if it succumbs to US overtures is a grim one. When Otway does finally marry Carlota for the fortune she acquires through Sab’s sacrifice of his own future at the end of the narrative, the Anglo-American quickly privileges his own “business interests” over his alleged love for her, and spends all his time securing the economic ties between the island-colony and the republic, traveling “now to Havana, now to the United States of America” (136). Powerless and oppressed, Carlota clearly embodies by the novel’s end the potential demise of Cuba’s soul as a protonation, “a poor poetic soul thrown in among a thousand materialistic lives,” “[g]ifted with a fertile and active imagination,” but young, “ignorant of life, at an age when life is no more than feelings” rather than “unceasing preoccupations with interests of a material nature.” Cast into “a mercantile and profit-oriented atmosphere,” Carlota finds herself “obliged to live calculatingly, by reflection and by measuring advantage” (135). Yet the narrator refuses to eclipse all hope from this marital allegory, claiming in the final lines of the novel to be unable to find out “whatever may be [Carlota’s] fate and the nation of the world in which she is residing” – a refusal fully to inscribe a future annexation to the United States.

In the political vision propounded by Avellaneda’s novel, the salvation of Carlota and of Cuba lies unquestionably within Sab. Yet Carlota, like the young protonation governed by its white Creoles, proves unable to comprehend Sab fully because she cannot recognize her own mulatto inheritance, a simultaneously national and familial legacy of racial and cultural mixture within which her own slave proves also to be not only her first cousin but her soulmate in sensitivity to emotion and to beauty. But if Carlota fails in these ways, Avellaneda’s narrative nevertheless proposes an alternative Cuba – and an alternative ending for her romance – in Carlota’s distant relative and figurative sister, Teresa. In a story shaped by ambiguous adoptions and hidden kinships, Avellaneda’s narrator suggestively posits Teresa as the heir to another family secret, the subject of an unacknowledged interracial past, and thus a mulatta double for Sab.

From the opening chapters of the novel, Teresa and Sab are uncannily linked through the visual tropes of eye and gaze. They share the same

distinctively straight brows over eyes that flash suddenly and repeatedly, bespeaking in both of them hidden knowledge and emotion. Both search for the meaning of their own reflection before the world; when their eyes finally meet toward the middle of the novel, they regard each other “as though in a mirror,” comprehending “in the glance of the other the painful feeling” that possesses them both. About Sab, the narrator discloses falteringly that he “did not appear to be a white criollo,” yet “neither was he black nor could one take him for a descendant of the indigenous inhabitants of the Antilles,” nor is he precisely “a perfect mulatto” (28). Similarly, while Teresa is assigned no racial designations at all, the language used to describe her reveals an equivalent inability to settle on a positive formulation, a rhetorical shuttling through the liminal space between one negative and another: “Her features, while not repugnant, were in no way attractive . . . no one would call her ugly . . . no one would think her beautiful.” Unreadable, Teresa’s face “fail[s] to speak” (35), her very inscrutability accenting the story of her background and its similarity to that of her counterpart in Sab.

Like Sab, Teresa is both an orphan and the illegitimate child of one of Carlota’s relatives. Though the narrator reveals nothing about her mother other than her absent state – she has conveniently died giving birth to Teresa – her father is described as “a libertine,” married to a woman who “loathed” Carlota for unspecified reasons and treated her with “pride and harshness.” Like Sab, “a slave from [his] mother’s womb,” Teresa, too, has “from her birth . . . been weighed down by misfortune”; the narrator contends that her soul is “hidden under the scarred tissue of protracted calamities” – as if her body could be marked figuratively with the signs of her ancestors’ enslavement (36). Thus when Sab begs Teresa to meet him, he mysteriously invokes the name of her absent mother, as if this maternal figure might embody an unspoken link between them, a “dark woman” like the subject of his song in the novel’s opening scene. And though Sab speaks to Teresa during their clandestine meeting as a slave addressing one who ostensibly occupies a position of untroubled whiteness – “nature has not been any less our mother than yours,” he tells her – even these words evoke a maternal relation between them, and between all Cuban criollos and Cuban slaves. Teresa herself underscores that she “knows” Sab’s situation as a slave within a Creole family, that she well understands what she calls “the perils of that kind of intimacy” (96).

Initially presented as cold and duplicitous, Teresa’s character evolves by the middle of the narrative into the Creole heroine that Carlota fails to become. Indeed, as an alternative female embodiment of a protonational but still colonial Cuba, Teresa superficially adores Otway at the outset of

the narrative but soon learns to recognize the truer nobility of the novel's mulatto, and more authentically Cuban, protagonist. She chooses a figurative national autonomy, the isolation of the convent, over compromising herself to the foreign and speculating interests of the Anglo-American interloper, even when given a clear chance to win his hand in marriage. Perhaps most importantly, Teresa acknowledges her kinship to Sab, proclaiming herself ready to become his wife and sibling alike: "I am that woman which entrusts herself to you; we are both orphans and unfortunate souls . . . Allow me, then, to follow you to remote climes, to the heart of the wilderness. I will be your friend, your companion, your sister!" (108).

Figurative siblings, would-be lovers, and interracial doppelgängers, Sab and Teresa are finally also the novel's potential bearers of a Cuban literary history. Teresa proves throughout the narrative, from the first description of her eyes alone, to be "capable of an awesome language" (35). But it is Sab who effectively authors the novel's powerful ending with his letter to Teresa. Written on his deathbed, the text of the letter occupies a full seven pages in a very short novel, giving way again to the omniscient narrator's postscript only for a brief two pages. Detailing the "rich store of interests" that books held for Sab in his childhood, this letter registers through Sab's voice a brief but powerful critique of a few of the most enduring components of the Western literary tradition: the "beautiful" language of patriotism that shapes the poetic "destiny of those men who fought and died for their country"; and the related rhetoric of courtly chivalry that produces "the mad love which a vassal felt for his queen or a humble man for some illustrious and proud lady" (141–42). In Sab such romantic and protonationalist literary modes initially incite the imagined sounds of "martial music, shouts of triumph, and songs of victory" – "a savage zeal at great words like 'country' and 'liberty'" (142, 141). Yet the pleasures of these texts always dissipate as they simultaneously produce "the terrible echo of a sinister voice" in his head, one that registers his reinterpellation as an inferior being: "You are a mulatto and a slave" (143, 142). Describing such readerly moments, Sab exposes not only the rhetorical dependence of the chivalric tradition upon a metaphorical enslavement that elides the lived experience of slaves, but also the very complicity of literary nationalism with slavery and the racial hierarchies that sustained it. Only Shakespeare's *Othello* – which he glosses not as a representation of obsessive jealousy but as one of interracial love – allows him to be briefly "transported with pleasure and pride" in its contention that "[b]eing an African is no blemish" (142).

The novel thus deploys Sab's epistolary critique to clear a kind of space for an alternative Cuban tradition. Posing Sab as the novel's true poetic soul,

a soaring “nocturnal bird [who] wished to gaze on the sun like an eagle,” the narrative holds up its mulatto protagonist in stark opposition to the crude manifest destiny embodied in its Anglo-American villain, a peddler whose metaphorically charged trade is pointedly in textiles or *lienzos*, a ware whose etymology traces a relation between the written word and its potential commodification. The text that takes its privileged place at the end of Avellaneda’s Cuban novel, on the other hand – written by Sab, carefully protected by Teresa, and passed on to Carlota for posterity – represents the sole salvation available for its Creole heroine and for a colony depicted as corrupt and vulnerable to foreign desires. Indeed, Sab’s written testimony both predicts a literary future in which “the angel of poetry will shine its rays over the new kingdom of the intellect” and itself embodies this future by acknowledging what the larger literary tradition he critiques cannot: the plight of Cuba’s slaves, “the mark of irons on [their] triumphant hands”; and its women, “[p]oor, blind victims . . . bow[ing] their heads under the yoke of human laws”; and finally, through repeated lamentations for his own adoptive Indian mother, the history of its destroyed indigenous population (142, 144, 139).

This adoptive Indian mother recalls Bryant’s “A Story of the Island of Cuba” in a number of uncanny ways. Like the Indians of Bryant’s tale, “old Martina,” as the local people call her, raises questions about the lingering presence of an indigenous population in Cuba. She falsely claims herself a “descendant of the Indian race,” in Don Carlos’s disparaging point of view, “and puts on ridiculous majestic airs.” Sab, however, refers to Martina reverentially as “the old Indian woman,” a maternal figure who relates to him unofficially but profoundly as her adoptive son. Sab contends that the farmers of Cubitas “really believe her to be a descendant of that unfortunate race,” that the indigenous people of Cuba are not entirely but “*almost* extinct on this island,” and that Martina has a deep historical and spiritual knowledge of the indigenous Cuban past. Similarly, while Bryant’s story associates the possible presence of Indians with the transamerican threat of slave revolt and the specter of Saint-Domingue, Avellaneda also deploys her novel’s Indian character to declare that “the descendants of the oppressors will be themselves oppressed, and black men will be the terrible avengers of those of copper color” – a prediction that becomes more potent when viewed across cultural and national lines, through the lens of “the frightful and recent example of a neighboring island” (72–73).

Yet while Bryant’s story works to contain this threat and to secure its Indian characters’ allegedly Mexican origin as “a matter of history,” Avellaneda’s novel never resolves the ambiguity of Martina’s descent with

final certainty. *Sab* instead draws on her magical presence at the close of the narrative, when the local villagers witness her, long after her death, appearing at the site of Sab's grave where she is "transformed in a singular manner" into Carlota, "young, white, and beautiful" (147). Unlike the Indians of Bryant's story, transamerican catalysts for a tale that plays on fears of slave revolt throughout the Americas, Avellaneda's Indian woman embodies the novel's vision of the transcendence of the interracial love it celebrates: Sab's love for Carlota; and, after his death, Carlota's for Sab. Perhaps, then, Avellaneda's Martina resurrects Marina, the indigenous woman and mistress of Cortés who originates the same interracial genealogies – both real and imagined, both familial and textual – that inspire the fantasies of William Hickling Prescott and the revisionism of *Jicoténcal*. Avellaneda's Martina also anticipates the mystical depiction of Indian women in Frances Calderón de la Barca's *Life in Mexico*, a work that engendered another series of transamerican literary relations to which the following chapter now turns.

Hawthorne's Mexican genealogies

THE MANY TONGUES OF "YANKEELAND"

In the preface to Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1844 tale "Rappaccini's Daughter," the narrator presents the text satirically as a translation, a piece in English whose mysterious French original was ostensibly penned in a "shadowy, and unsubstantial" style by "M. de l'Aubépine."¹ The name "Aubépine" is itself a translation of Hawthorne's name, given to the author by a French tutor and companion while he was visiting his friend Horatio Bridge in Augusta, Maine, in 1837. During this visit with Bridge, Hawthorne reported in his journal that he was struck by the "intermixture of foreigners" in "Yankeeland": the "strange" sounds of "children bargaining in French," the "hovels of . . . wild Irish, scattered about as if they had sprung up like mushrooms . . . where the roots of an old tree are hidden under the ground."² Apparently taken with the intercultural developments he described, Hawthorne appropriated the name "Aubépine" for himself, using it afterwards in several letters to his wife Sophia.³

Later during the visit to Maine, Hawthorne recorded a fascinating conversation with the tutor in which this "queer little Frenchman" alleges that he has "never yet sinned with a woman," despite "his residence in dissolute countries," various wild outland sites of the New World (32, 46). Hawthorne purports to take the foreign tutor at his word on this putative chastity, though his journal notes wryly that the Frenchman proves "greatly delighted with any attention from the ladies" (57). Nevertheless, the ostensibly celibate wanderer does in a sense produce a scion who will inhabit Hawthorne's later fictional world of genealogical ambiguities. After Hawthorne departs from Maine, the Frenchman disappears from the pages of the journal, presumably to settle in some part of the dissolute American hemisphere that he loves exploring. But his surname – Schaeffer – will reappear as the family name of Hawthorne's famous dark lady in *The Marble Faun*. Like her namesake, Miriam Schaeffer befriends a pair of

Anglo-Americans against whom Hawthorne registers her cultural difference. Though she "hides her antecedents," the Schaeffer daughter is reputed by one account to be the illegitimate and mixed-race child of a man in the United States, the "offspring of a Southern American planter," with "one burning drop of African blood in her veins."⁴ Reversing her figurative father's emigration, Miriam has fled, according to this rumor, to live in Europe.

That the actual Frenchman Schaeffer could sire a daughter of partial African descent in the imaginative world of Hawthorne's fiction might seem unlikely given the Maine setting of the author's initial encounter with him. Yet Hawthorne's observation of a portrait of the Empress Josephine hanging on the wall of an inn in the French-settled portion of the Maine countryside underscores the intimate, even familial, relation of nineteenth-century France to the slaveholding francophone sites of the Americas, including the Caribbean island of Martinique, where Josephine, a wealthy Creole planter's daughter, was born and raised before her marriage to Napoleon Bonaparte. The French that Hawthorne hears in "Yankeeland" was a language not only of colonial enterprise but of thriving inter-American trade between Maine and the francophone Caribbean, and more generally between the east coast of North America and the larger West Indies. Just as Miriam Schaeffer has been "plucked up out of a mystery, with its roots still clinging to her" (23), the "intermixture of foreigners" that Hawthorne observes in Maine overlays a persistent genealogical uncertainty, figured botanically in his journal as mushrooms "sprung up" above hidden roots. Enlisted as a French pseudonym in "Rappaccini's Daughter" – a tale of poisonous anthropomorphic plant cross-breeding devoted to metaphors of transgressive "commixture" – the appellation Aubépine thus evokes Hawthorne's own experience with a scene of "Yankeeland" multilingualism as well as the transamerican and interracial genealogies this multilingualism embeds. As an alleged translation of Aubépine's tale, Hawthorne's story raises similar questions about its own authorial ancestry, its own "shadowy, and unsubstantial" genealogy as a literary text.

Yet the tale that follows the preface proves virtually obsessed with establishing its own strictly European sources in prior writing, thereby effacing what might be construed as its inherently mixed American origins. Self-consciously allusive, the story proceeds to flaunt its wide-ranging genealogy of Western classics, its investment in a tradition that includes Genesis and Dante, the two most obvious examples, but also Aristotle, Ovid, Spenser, Milton, Machiavelli, Browne, and Voltaire.⁵ There are, in fact, so many allusions in so few pages that the story seems at moments to be primarily

about its own European literary heritage – far removed from the mid-nineteenth-century United States in which it was written and published. In this sense, “Rappaccini’s Daughter” finds Hawthorne distancing himself from the “tottering infancy of our literature” that he famously denounced for its “girlish feebleness” in his 1830 essay on Anne Hutchinson and the rise of women writers. Setting the tale in sixteenth-century Italy – in an imagined Italy where, as Hawthorne wrote in the preface to his other Italian-set work *The Marble Faun*, “actualities would not be so terribly insisted upon, as they are, and must needs be, in America” (3) – the author who had earlier scorned the women writers of his homeland now boldly addressed himself instead to the venerable scene of European literary history, a gesture that separated the story geographically and thematically from his earlier work.⁶

The tale takes place within a hermetically enclosed garden that seems designed precisely to resist historicization, an Edenic space in which the young Giovanni becomes infatuated with Beatrice, a tempting woman in a beautiful garden, only to learn that she may potentially destroy him. The particular danger this Eve-figure holds lies in her breath, alleged to be fatally toxic because she has been raised from infancy among the lethal plants and flowers cultivated by her father Rappaccini, a medical scientist of dubious reputation. Baglioni, a professor of medicine who is also Rappaccini’s rival, intercedes to warn the young man that Beatrice is as dangerous as the botanical realm over which Rappaccini presides: a garden cross-bred to produce “new varieties of poison more horribly deleterious than Nature . . . would ever have plagued the world withal.” Seeking to cure her “poisonousness,” Giovanni administers to Beatrice a potion that promptly kills her. The “Eden of the present world” figured throughout the text appears remote from the American hemisphere, marked by its author’s aspirations to transcend national and historical contingency.

Yet, as I will argue in this chapter, “Rappaccini’s Daughter” returns unflinching to the very American scenes that it seems designed to escape, a dense matrix of transamerican cultural exchange and literary influence emerging out of relations between the United States and the wider Americas. This milieu yielded both the earlier and later transamerican affiliations of Hawthorne’s familial genealogy as well as of his editorial and Customs House careers: his father’s and other ancestors’ trading voyages to the West Indies and South America; his editorial work on accounts of travel in the Caribbean and other parts of the Americas; and the special view he was afforded as a customs agent of the illegal slave trade among West Indian and US ports.⁷ More specifically, the political and cultural confrontations between the United States and Mexico during the early 1840s – numerous

accounts of which accompanied Hawthorne's literary production in the journals in which he was then publishing – distinctly shaped his emergence from relative obscurity into literary notoriety, defining and sustaining his sense of himself as an aspiring national author, capable of competing on the European literary scene, rather than a parochial writer limited to indigenous American topics, and particularly what he called “the most peculiar field of American fiction”: “I do abhor an Indian story,” he wrote in his 1854 “Sketches from Memory.”⁸

This was a hemispheric context that Hawthorne himself would surely have abnegated: in a revealing comment in an 1836 letter to his eldest sister, Elizabeth, the author explicitly eschewed writing about “Texas, Mexico, and the Devil knows where,”⁹ and he publicly mocked Joel Barlow for being the kind of writer who might “meditate an epic on the war between Mexico and Texas.”¹⁰ Within the transamerican arena in which he found some of the most enduring themes and images of his own fictional imaginary, Hawthorne understood his role as author precisely against the presence of those writers whom he figured as aboriginal New World inhabitants, “ink-stained Amazons” who threatened to produce what he anxiously envisioned as a mixed and impure national literary offspring of “Indian” stories – bred, like Ann Hutchinson's stolen infant daughter, among barbarous natives.¹¹

Though I will be referring throughout to Hawthorne's wider writings and career, I have chosen to focus this chapter on “Rappaccini's Daughter” because of the fascinating ways in which it bears textual and thematic traces of the transamerican problematic against which Hawthorne defined his career, and in particular for its emergence at the intersection of a series of Mexican lines of literary descent that the story effectively suppresses through a strangely deceptive relation to its own literary past. For among the numerous references that “Rappaccini's Daughter” makes to a European literary genealogy, Hawthorne omits any such self-conscious allusion to the one source closest to his own historical moment, Frances Calderón de la Barca's *Life in Mexico* (1843), a work mired in hemispheric controversies over colonialism, race, slavery, and US imperial designs on Mexico. Exploring in some detail the extent of Hawthorne's literary indebtedness in creating “Rappaccini's Daughter” to a work produced in and about Mexico over a two-and-a-half-year period, this chapter seeks to uncover what I am calling the tale's Mexican genealogies: its immediate sources in *Life in Mexico* as well as in the widely publicized *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan* (1843) by the archaeologist-explorer John L. Stephens, whose particular genealogical obsession with Indian origins throughout the Americas finds symbolic expression in the ubiquitous figure of the “*mano colorada*” or red hand

marking the Yucatán ruins – and later shaping Hawthorne’s fictional renditions of a “crimson hand.”

The wider implications of Hawthorne’s appropriation of Calderón and Stephens for a tale that eschews its own transamericanism become discernible in the overlapping circumstances of these writers’ literary and political affiliations with the contemporaneous Yucatecan writer Justo Sierra O’Reilly. Sierra’s 1841 historical novella, *El filibustero*, finds a compelling place within Hawthorne’s Mexican genealogies, demonstrating Sierra’s literary engagement with a number of issues addressed in the US text, from transatlantic intertextuality to thematic relations between poison and racial hybridity, just before the Mexican author’s visit to Washington, D.C., and his immersion in Anglo-American literary and political matters. Sierra would credit as a lasting influence his exposure to Cooper, among other notable US writers (very likely including Hawthorne). Returning to Yucatán with an urgent desire to consolidate what he now perceived as the fluid racial borders within his homeland, he produced the first Spanish translation of Stephens’s *Travel in Yucatan* and began a virulent journalistic campaign to exterminate the Mayan Indians. That Sierra also became a leading proponent of a potential US annexation of Yucatán, supporting Yucatán’s refusal to join forces with sovereign Mexico against the United States in the ensuing war, sheds further light on the intimate relations of literary influence and historical trajectory surrounding Hawthorne’s tale.

More than a century after the initial publication of “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” the future Nobel laureate Octavio Paz found in Hawthorne’s text a narrative through which he, too, could ostensibly embrace a European literary style, abandoning the explicitly political poetics of his earlier years to propound the surrealism of André Breton. Yet the varied US-Mexican traversals characterizing the transmission of “Rappaccini’s Daughter” produce an insistent historicity within Paz’s notably surreal 1956 play *La hija de Rappaccini*, a recapitulation of the author’s central formulations of Mexican national identity in *The Labyrinth of Solitude*. More recently still, out of these same border crossings emerges a specifically Chicana tradition of cultural critique in the writings of poet-critic Gloria Anzaldúa, who turns a revealing gaze back upon the Mexican tropes that shaped Hawthorne’s tale. Paz’s literary revisiting of the Mexican arena that Hawthorne’s story both draws upon and eschews – as well as Anzaldúa’s commentary on the nationalist traditions that Paz and Hawthorne respectively embody – offers a twentieth-century perspective on the status of “Rappaccini’s Daughter” as an American text in the full hemispheric sense of the word, giving its

readers a lens through which to begin to see Hawthorne's wider literary relation to the Americas.¹²

“EL ÁRBOL DE LAS MANITAS”: FRANCES CALDERÓN
DE LA BARCA

Frances Erskine Inglis was a Scottish immigrant to the United States who married an Argentine-born diplomat, Angel Calderón de la Barca, in 1838. The two left the United States the following year for Mexico, where Angel Calderón acted as Spain's first Minister to the postcolonial republic until 1842. “Fanny” Calderón wrote prolifically during this period of her husband's diplomatic service in Mexico, and her compilation of journal entries made its first appearance in book form in the United States soon after her return. Published quasi-anonymously as the writing of “Madame C___ de la B___,” Calderón's book received considerable attention among US readers for its commentary on Mexican society; Prescott, author of its original preface, praised Calderón for her access to “the best sources of information in regard to whatever could interest an enlightened foreigner.”¹³ For these “enlightened foreigner[s]” of the United States, moreover, the book held particular significance as a document emerging from Mexico on the eve of the US-Mexican War, when the annexation of Texas was hotly debated both within the United States and between the two countries. Calderón's writing was seen as an important contribution to this nexus of political controversies, exploring, as one reviewer put it, “a topic of intense interest, with which the great mass of us have very little acquaintance, and concerning which we have the most vague and erroneous notions”: “our Mexican neighbors, whom we are in the ungenerous habit of under-rating.”¹⁴

The words of this reviewer appeared in February 1843, in the same journal in which Hawthorne would publish “Rappaccini's Daughter” nearly two years later: the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review* – or “La Revue Anti-Aristocratique,” as Hawthorne's preface of translations renames it. But Hawthorne had read Calderón's work many months before this publication reviewed it.¹⁵ In an entry from one of the *American Notebooks* made sometime after June 1, 1842, Hawthorne paraphrases from Calderón's book:

Madame Calderón de la B (in *Life in Mexico*) speaks of persons who have been inoculated with the venom of rattlesnakes, by pricking them in various places with the tooth. These persons are thus secured forever after against the bite of any venomous reptile. They have the power of calling snakes, and feel great pleasure in playing with and handling them. Their own bite becomes poisonous to people

not inoculated in the same manner. Thus a part of the serpent's nature appears to be transfused into them.¹⁶

As Randall Stewart first pointed out in his 1932 edition of the *American Notebooks*, this passage represents a possible source for "Rappaccini's Daughter," in which Giovanni Guasconti debates the alleged poisonousness of his beloved Beatrice.¹⁷ The wider implications of this source for Hawthorne's story are not immediately apparent, however, for a tale set far in space and time from the Mexican coasts that Calderón describes in the original passage:

Here, and all along the coasts, the people are in the habit of inoculating themselves with the poison of the rattlesnake, which renders them safe from the bite of all venomous animals. The person to be inoculated is pricked with the tooth of the serpent – on the tongue, in both arms, and on various parts of the body – and the venom introduced into the wounds. An eruption comes out, which lasts a few days. Ever after, these persons can handle the most venomous snakes with impunity; can make them come by calling them; have great pleasure in fondling them – and the bite of these persons is poisonous! . . . A gentleman who breakfasted here this morning says that he has been vainly endeavoring to make up his mind to submit to the operation, as he is very much exposed where he lives, and is obliged to travel a great deal on the coast . . . [W]hen he goes on these expeditions he is always accompanied by his servant, an inoculated Negro, who has the power of curing him, should he be bit, by sucking the poison from the wound. He also saw this Negro cure the bite given by an inoculated Indian boy to a white boy with whom he was fighting, and who was the stronger of the two . . . I cannot say that I should like to have so much *snaky* nature transferred into my composition, nor to live amongst people whose bite is venomous.¹⁸

A comparison of Calderón's original observations and Hawthorne's paraphrase in the *American Notebooks* quickly reveals that the future author of "Rappaccini's Daughter" expunged from the very paragraph he cited the anxious racial coding that inspires this description. In Calderón's account, racial differences can have lethal consequences: it is specifically the nonwhite populations who carry the "venomous" charge of the snake – a poisonousness that subtly metaphorizes the possibility of racial mixture throughout the passage. Accordingly, the "gentleman," "very much exposed" to the dangers of coastal snakes as well as "snaky" indigenous populations, cannot finally "submit to the operation" that promises immunity but also a new inclusion "amongst people whose bite is poisonous." He travels thus with "an inoculated Negro," a servant whose duties suggestively involve "sucking the poison from [his master's] wound." This "inoculated Negro," moreover, has "cure[d] the bite given by an inoculated Indian boy to a

white boy”; as the servant of the “gentleman,” he seems to function, for Calderón, to protect white bodies from “poisonous,” indigenous threats – from the possibility of “*snaky* nature transferred into my composition.”

Calderón's propensity for such racial coding is consistent with the more general pattern of self-censorship she followed in redrafting her journal for its publication in the United States. From the early pages of the journal, for example, she omitted a detailed entry that recounts her first response to what she saw as the transgression of interracial marriage. Stopping first in Havana on her way from the United States to Mexico, Calderón notes right away, with no small amount of distaste, that the Spanish colonial official acting as her host, Don Bernardo Hechavarría, is married to a woman of mixed race:

Figurez-vous, a little wild-looking mulatto – all hunched up in white muslin and dirty blonde – without stays – biting her fingers and tearing her handkerchief with her teeth. Never have I been more astonished – seeing that her husband is good-looking and fond of show . . . while she with her bare brown arms, uncombed hair, gown open behind, [rolls] along generally cleaning her teeth with a toothpick. (18–19)

The section from which Calderón omitted these remarks includes an extended description of her stay in colonial Cuba where, as Howard Fisher and Marion Hall Fisher (the editors of the reconstituted *Life in Mexico*) contend, she was “psychologically quite unprepared for what she was to encounter in a tropical Spanish colony long accustomed to a mixture of racial stocks.”¹⁹ “[I]t is said that there are not more than three or four families *de sang pur* in the Island,” Calderón writes, remarking on the differences she perceives between Cuba and the United States: “It is not, however, as in the US, any disgrace” (31). Her speculations as to the racial demography of nineteenth-century Cuba were not accurate, nor was her implied observation of the culture's prevailing racial ideology, which equated whiteness in no uncertain terms with superiority. Yet, as Robert Paquette has noted, “[s]exual relations between white males and nonwhite females had long been an accepted part of colonial Cuban culture,” and interracial marriages sometimes served as a means of exchanging racial and class privileges: a free and wealthy *parda*, a woman of partial African ancestry, might thus marry a white man from a lower class, “the lighter skin of one spouse [giving] immediate social benefits to the other and eventual benefits to the offspring.” The fluidity of racial boundaries relative to those in the United States ensured that Calderón as well as many of her contemporary travelers to the island mistakenly observed what Paquette calls “near

color blindness among Cuba's inhabitants"; the interracial harmony such travel writers thought they perceived in a colony supported by African slave labor was merely a testament to the rabidity of racism in the United States by comparison.²⁰ Calderón's choice to omit her description of Señora Hechavarría reflects an awareness that her observations of colonial Cuban life would indeed have elicited an inflammatory response from her readers; evidently, by the time she sought publication she preferred not to fuel her audience's racial anxieties with this particular passage.²¹

But even the expurgated version of *Life in Mexico* seems to have provoked just such a reaction from Hawthorne, whose appropriation of Calderón registers the tale's more general participation in what Robert Young has called an "obsession and paranoia about hybridity" that was, in a period of global imperialism, most pronounced of all in the mid-nineteenth-century United States.²² Initially, this paranoia is manifested in the orientalist fable of Western male vulnerability that Baglioni cites when warning Giovanni against the alleged toxic charms of Rappaccini's daughter, Beatrice:

an Indian prince . . . sent a beautiful woman as a present to Alexander the Great. She was as lovely as the dawn and gorgeous as the sunset . . . but a certain sage physician, happening to be present, discovered a terrible secret in regard to her . . . That this lovely woman . . . had been nourished with poisons from her birth upward, until her whole nature was so imbued with them that she herself had become the deadliest poison in existence. Poison was her element of life . . . Her love would have been poison! – her embrace death! . . . The old fable of the Indian woman has become a truth . . . in the person of the lovely Beatrice.²³

Unlike Calderón, Hawthorne explicitly sexualizes the poison that threatens his own young protagonist, locating it specifically in a female body whose deadly love may entice the hero to his demise. Positing a lethal toxicity in female sexuality that conforms to the convention of the nineteenth-century literary femme fatale, Baglioni's fable of Alexander and the Indian woman suggests as well that the fatal "embrace" awaiting Giovanni may be an interracial one, corroding the Occidental purity that the narrative has taken special care to locate in this protagonist with "rather a Grecian than an Italian head . . . fair, regular features, and a glistening of gold among his ringlets" (104).

The background and analogue of Giovanni's precarious relation to Beatrice is precisely Rappaccini's garden of poisonous hybrid plants, in which Hawthorne presents his readers with what he terms "monstrous offspring": a botanical spectacle that "would have shocked a delicate instinct" with

its scandalous "commixture, and, as it were, adultery" (110). Replete with the "language of moral disapprobation" that, as Harriet Ritvo notes of nineteenth-century discussions of zoological hybridity, signals an inevitable connection to "more narrowly human concerns," Hawthorne's descriptions of the garden appear to code the transgressive reproductive potential between the two lovers.²⁴ Thus Beatrice herself is characterized as the product of a kind of botanical miscegenation, a self-described "sister" to the garden's cross-bred flowers who exists in a taxonomic border area between human and nonhuman, European and non-European: in the narrator's words, Beatrice shows in her complexion "a bloom so deep and vivid that one shade more would have been too much."²⁵ As Young has observed, moreover, nineteenth-century "theories of race were . . . also covert theories of desire"²⁶ and, Hawthorne's tale suggests, vice versa: the emotion Beatrice engenders in Giovanni is neither love nor horror, the narrator specifies, but "a wild offspring of both . . . that had each parent in it," a "lurid intermixture" of "dark" and "bright" (105) – another progeny of crossed descent, one that ominously refigures Calderón's repeated observations of the "intermixture of . . . blood" producing the *mestizo* Mexican women whom she calls "beautiful creatures": "All that is best of Indian and Spanish, 'of dark and bright,' seems united in her" (443). Accordingly, when Giovanni applies Baglioni's fable of the "poisonous" Indian woman to his beloved, "he [falls] down, groveling among earthly doubts, and defile[s] therewith the pure whiteness of her image" (120). And Beatrice herself, when Giovanni decries her toxicity, tells him to forget her, to "Go forth out of the garden and mingle with thy race" (125).

Yet the narrative's suggestive equation of poisonousness with racial "commixture" is only the most explicit of its debts to Calderón. Just as Hawthorne's Italian hero, "not unstudied in the great poem of his country," associates Rappaccini's garden at first sight with a scene once "pictured by Dante" (93), Calderón, too, narrates her experience in Mexico by invoking the Italian poet at significant moments. Recounting a trip to Puebla, she writes, "Gradually, as in Dante's *Commedia*, after leaving Purgatory, typified by Veracruz, we seemed to draw nearer to Paradise." Describing this Mexican Eden, she details "trees covered with every variety of blossom, and loaded with the most delicious tropical fruits; flowers of every colour filling the air with fragrance; and the most fantastical profusion of parasitical plants intertwining the branches and flinging their bright blossoms over every bough." Not without its own Beatrice, Calderón's Paradise soon offers "a glimpse of an Indian woman, with her long hair, resting under the

shade of a lofty tree, beside a running stream – an Oriental picture” (67–69). Hawthorne creates from Calderón’s “Paradise,” then, his own “Eden of the present world,” a garden of “flowers gorgeously magnificent,” “profusion[s] of purple blossoms, each of . . . the lustre and richness of a gem,” pervaded by a voice “as rich as a tropical sunset” that makes Giovanni “think of perfumes heavily delectable.” Like Calderón’s plants – ominously “parasitical” even in their beauty – his, too, have a “beauty [that] conceal[s] a deadlier malice”; her “plants intertwining the branches and flinging their bright blossoms over every bough” become in “Rappaccini’s Daughter” the “mingling plants” that “crept serpent-like . . . climbed on high, using whatever means of ascent . . . offered them” (95–96). From Calderón’s “Oriental picture,” Hawthorne takes the “oriental sunshine” (110) of his own heroine’s beauty; like the Beatrice-figure of Calderón’s “Paradise,” Hawthorne’s Beatrice, too, will have her counterpart in an “Indian woman”: the poisonous temptress of Baglioni’s fable who bears the double sign of India and the Americas.

More striking still is the plant that Calderón encounters in the Mexican National Botanic Garden, housed in the former palace of Cortés: “*El árbol de las manitas* (the tree of the small hands).”²⁷ Remarkably, it is tended by an “old Italian” gardener, who is “nearly bent double” with age, but “possesses all his faculties” (190). Like the “chief treasure” (97) of Rappaccini’s garden, this plant is the most curious and precious of the Botanic Garden, one of “only three . . . in the republic” (190). Observing its strangely human quality – a “flower . . . of a bright scarlet in the form of a hand, with five fingers and a thumb” (190) – Calderón describes a plant that finds in “Rappaccini’s Daughter” a purple-blossomed counterpart precisely in the poisonous hybrid that Beatrice calls her “sister.” The kinship between Beatrice and this hybrid afflicts Giovanni with “a burning and tingling agony in his hand”:

– in his right hand – the very hand which Beatrice had grasped in her own when he was on the point of plucking one of the gemlike flowers. On the back of that hand there was now a purple print like that of four small fingers, and the likeness of a slender thumb upon his wrist . . . Giovanni wrapt a handkerchief about his hand and wondered what evil thing had stung him. (115)

The human characteristic of Calderón’s rare Mexican plant thus becomes the central botanical image of Hawthorne’s tale of overlapped plant and human “commixture.” The flower of the “small hands” in Rappaccini’s cross-bred garden – through its human sister – leaves a “purple print” of poisonous impurity on Giovanni.

LA MANO COLORADA: STEPHENS'S TRAVEL IN YUCATAN AND
THE MATTER OF ORIGINS

The enlistment in Hawthorne's story of these and other details from *Life in Mexico* underscores the inevitable permeability of inter-American borders to itinerant narratives and anxieties. The literary fascination and political significance that Mexico in particular held for US readers during these years converge with remarkable clarity in the pages of the *Democratic Review* itself, where Hawthorne was then employed as a regular contributor.²⁸ In issues over the two years preceding the publication of "Rappaccini's Daughter" in December 1844, a series of articles on eastern Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula locates the Mexican genealogies of Hawthorne's writing within a more precise geography. A recurring interest in these issues is the ancient archeological ruins of Yucatán as they had been described and analyzed in John L. Stephens's bestselling *Travel in Yucatan*, among other popular travel accounts covered by the journal. Stephens's writing on the ruins was so widely read within the first month of its release that the *Democratic Review* complained, as a genteel monthly publication, that it had little fresh material left to offer subscribers in its long review article: "who has not devoured [*Travel in Yucatan*] at ease in the quiet possession of his own or a borrowed copy? . . . Who at least has not picked up a tolerably extensive idea of . . . this fascinating work, from the innumerable 'notices' of the daily press and the very liberal extracts of the weekly?"²⁹ Appearing a year and a half before "Rappaccini's Daughter," the review weighs in on a debate concerning the Yucatán ruins that had been continuously covered in the journal since the October 1837 issue: were the ancestors of Yucatán's Mayan Indians the architectural creators of these buildings, or were they "constructed by some unknown race of people," long since extinct?³⁰ The magnificence of the Yucatán ruins posed at once a contradiction to theories of European racial superiority and suggested the possibility of a continental past that might bolster the claims of US cultural nationalism – an "ANCIENT AMERICA" that could lend prestige to a nation that perceived itself as lacking cultural antiquity.³¹ The "uncertainty that has been supposed to hang around [the] origin" of the ruins thus provided a venue for the contemplation of indigenous architecture and the implications of racial difference at a safe distance from US readers, in a seemingly remote but nevertheless American landscape of "enchanted scenes."³²

Many of these scenes exhibit compelling similarities to the language and details of Hawthorne's setting in "Rappaccini's Daughter." At the most basic level, the articles on Yucatán draw insistent analogies between

the Mesoamerican ruins and those of a European classical past, repeatedly deeming the former “not unworthy of the ancient arts of Greece or Rome.”³³ The ruins’ Italianate features in particular lend themselves to the travel writers’ shared project of locating a classical heritage within an American locale: just as the creators of the Yucatán architecture have vanished from history, so, too, have the old Italian geniuses, establishing that different races are subject to “growth . . . and decay”; thus “Italy, even in her degradation, can boast the immortal names of Dante and Petrarca.”³⁴ The writers contend throughout these articles that the sublime architecture of the ruins “belong[s] to no order known to us”³⁵ – yet the order they describe is consistently envisioned within a European, and often Italian, frame of reference. Even in a memorable etching of the “House of Caciques,” or Indian Chiefs, the centerpiece “female figure in a sitting posture, in basso-relievo,” looking out from the front of the building, is clearly modeled after the bust of a European lady – who, like Beatrice, looks out over her garden.³⁶

The same article – from an issue published around the time that Hawthorne copied from Calderón into his journal – describes the Yucatán ruins as “solemn memorials of departed generations, who have died and left no marks but these”: “The earth was strewed, as far as the eye could distinguish, with columns, some broken and some nearly perfect, which seemed to have been planted there by the genius of desolation which presided over this awful solitude.”³⁷ Here, the various writers find awe-inspiring “palaces magnificently built of stone” and other “magnificent relics” of a former age, more hewn and broken stones alongside elaborate sculptures and ancient fountains.³⁸ Such descriptions strangely mirror the desolate atmosphere in “Rappaccini’s Daughter” of Giovanni’s lodgings, registered in the building’s “armorial bearings of a family long since extinct.” The “old edifice [is] not unworthy to have been the palace of a noble,” “the pleasure palace of an opulent family.” At the center of their courtyard lies “the ruin of a marbled fountain . . . sculptured with rare art . . . but so woefully shattered that it was impossible to trace the original design from the remaining fragments,” “one century embod[y]ing it in marble while another scatter[s] the perishable garniture in the soil.”

The simultaneously lush and ominous qualities of the vegetation described in the Yucatán journalism prefigure Hawthorne’s Italian garden as well. The botanical realm flourishes in this “delightful climate,” where “the earth yields its fruits almost spontaneously,” and floral life thrives in such varieties that one ruin’s indigenous name, Xochicalco, translates as “House of Flowers.”³⁹ Like Giovanni, the Yucatán travelers must “cut [their] way

through the thick growth" leading to the ruins, "work [their] way through the wild thicket . . . to the small stone steps overgrown with bushes and vines," to reach "the most strange and incomprehensible pile of architecture that [their] eyes ever beheld – elaborate, elegant, stupendous."⁴⁰ Yet the "terrible energy of the tropical vegetation is hurrying rapidly to destruction" the cultural remnants that the travelers seek to understand.⁴¹ Stephens especially pauses over what he calls the "rankness of tropical vegetation"; "springing up beside the front wall [of a ruin], its fibers crept into cracks and crevices and became shoots and branches . . . carrying up large stones now locked in their embraces." "No sketch," he concludes grimly, "can convey a true idea of the ruthless gripe in which these gnarled and twisted roots encircle sculptured stones."⁴²

If Stephens perceives in the vegetation surrounding the Yucatán ruins the anthropomorphic quality of a "ruthless gripe," he finds literal human traces on the walls of the buildings themselves. Describing his preliminary archaeological endeavor at the ruins of Uxmal, he notes his first discovery of an ubiquitous sign in the Yucatán ruins:

Over the cavity left in the mortar by the removal of the stone were two conspicuous marks, which afterward stared us in the face in all the ruined buildings of the country. They were the prints of a red hand with the thumb and fingers extended, not drawn or painted, but stamped by the living hand, the pressure of the palm upon the stone. He who made it had stood before it alive as we did, and pressed his hand, moistened with red paint, hard against the stone. The seams and creases of the palm were clear and distinct in the impression. There was something lifelike about it that waked exciting thoughts, and almost presented the images of the departed inhabitants hovering about the building. And there was one striking feature about these hands; they were exceedingly small. Either of our own spread over and completely hid them; and this was interesting from the fact that we had ourselves remarked, and heard remarked by others, the smallness of the hands and feet as a striking feature in the physical conformation of the Indians at the present day.⁴³

In its "exceeding" smallness, the red hand or *mano colorada*, as Stephens comes to know it, is both easily concealed and highly revealing – itself "almost present[ing] the images of the departed inhabitants" – which lends it a kind of mystical or enchanted quality that "wake[s] exciting thoughts."⁴⁴ "Often as I saw this print," Stephens observes, "it never failed to interest me": upon each "desolate edifice," the mark "always brought me nearer to the builders of these cities" – "and at times, amid stillness, desolation and ruin, it seemed as if from behind the curtain that concealed them from view was extended the hand of greeting."⁴⁵ The hand thus becomes

an important symbolic marker within Stephens's genealogical obsession with the indigenous Mesoamerican past, a life-like link, in the clarity of its seams and creases, between the genius of the ancient builders and what he sees throughout his travel account as the racial degradation of the present Mayans.

Producing a fascinating combination of research and wishful hypothesis about the red hand, Stephens later consults George Catlin's "collection of Indian curiosities" and notes in his account that "it is a symbol recognized and in common use by the North American Indians of the present day. The red hand . . . points back from the wandering tribes in our country to the comparatively polished people who erected the great cities at the south . . . [and thus] its meaning can be ascertained by living witnesses, and through ages of intervening darkness a ray of light may be thrown back upon the now mysterious and incomprehensible characters which perplex the stranger on the walls of the desolate southern buildings."⁴⁶ Through the labor of North American Indian translators, as Stephens imagines it, the symbol of the red hand will travel as a ray of light between past and present to become a source of inter-American mediation, crossing national, cultural, and linguistic borders and ultimately lending itself to the production of a coherent narrative about the indigenous past and present throughout the Americas. Virtually obsessed by the second half of his travels with the meaning of the "mysterious red hand" and its "mysterious prints," Stephens finally consults with the famous linguist and anthropologist of North American Indians, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, and receives word from him only after his *Travel in Yucatan* is already in production.⁴⁷

As a two-page appendix to the travel account, Schoolcraft's reply to Stephens's query about the red hand supports the inter-American hypothesis advanced earlier in the volumes: the itinerant red hand must have made its way from an ancient North American context to an ancient Mexican one, forging an indigenous genealogical link between the two present-day nation states. More specifically, Schoolcraft's appendix imbues the red hand with medical and occult associations that prefigure the hand-shaped mark that appears on Giovanni after his encounters with the strange doctor and his protégée-daughter, Beatrice. In Schoolcraft's interpretation, the hand is a pictorial symbol "for strength, power, or mastery" – "not uncommon among those among them who profess the arts of medicine, magic, and prophesy." The symbol of the hand alone, moreover, is often inscribed not upon wood or stone but upon the human body itself in preparation for devotional rituals: "And the fact deserves further consideration," Schoolcraft notes, "from these preparations being generally made in the Arcanum

of the medicineman, or secret lodge, or some other private place, and with all the skill of the priest's, or medicine man's, or the juggler's art." The symbol is then imprinted on the body of the recipient through the impression or grip of another's hand – "thus convey[ing the idea of] a secret influence, a charm, a mystic power . . ." (315–16).

Stephens's fascination with the symbol of the red hand caught on among several of the reviewers of and commentators on travel writing about Mexico who published in the *Democratic Review*; the hand mark was taken as virtual proof, for a reviewer writing in a May 1843 essay on the Yucatán ruins, that the architecture was of Mayan origin rather than the product of a separate and long-extinct race.⁴⁸ By this point Hawthorne had already copied into his journal from Calderon's *Life in Mexico*, in which the rare *árbol de las manitas* flourished quietly in a Mexican garden. In Stephens's far more popular work about Mexico, however, the image of the tiny hand takes on a more specific cultural resonance, lending itself to the occult atmospheres of racial hybridity pervading Hawthorne's fictional work. The print of the *manita* or "*mano colorada*" appears as well in Hawthorne's "The Birth-mark," this time as the "Crimson Hand" of "ineludible gripe" that stains the "whitest marble" of Georgianna's cheek.⁴⁹ In a story that might be read as a kind of inverted companion to the tale of Rappaccini's cross-breeding experiment upon Beatrice, the scientist Alymer endeavors to remove the mark of the "*mano colorada*" that supposedly ruins Georgianna's complexion. Mocked by his mysterious assistant of "smoky aspect" (43), Alymer destroys his beloved, as Giovanni destroys Beatrice, in his obsessive determination to establish and ensure her whiteness, to purify the skin that appears marked by a "human hand . . . of the smallest pigmy size" (38).

TRAVEL WRITING AND THE POLITICS OF RECEPTION

The years immediately following the release of Calderón's and Stephens's travel writings, as well as the *Democratic Review*'s numerous articles engaging with Texas and Mexico in the years preceding the war, saw not only the publication of Hawthorne's tale of poisonous "commixture" but also the dramatic rise in the United States of racial antipathy towards Mexico, exhibited in such inflammatory statements as the Mississippi senator and future Secretary of the Treasury Robert J. Walker's estimation in 1844 that five-sixths of the Mexican population were "of the mixed races . . . composed of every poisonous compound of blood and color."⁵⁰ The period was characterized by the development of what Reginald Horsman terms a "racial Anglo-Saxonism" catalyzed by increasing US confrontations with Mexico

in the Southwest. As Horsman notes, "In confronting the Mexicans the Americans clearly formulated the idea of themselves as an Anglo-Saxon race," which they defined as "the purest of the pure," while the Mexicans were depicted as "a mixed, inferior race with considerable Indian and some black blood," a "mongrel race" that "stood in the way of southwestern expansion."⁵¹

In the dispute over Texas, US politicians repeatedly characterized the territory as fundamentally different from Mexico because of its partially Anglo population, "freshly immigrant from our Union," as the *Democratic Review* put it in one polemical editorial.⁵² Casting the territorial confrontation as a corporeal crisis within the national body of the United States, another editorial asked, "Who will refuse to heal the bleeding wounds of the mutilated West, and reunite the veins and arteries dis severed by the dismembering cession of Texas to Spain?"⁵³ Texas represented the consolidation and naturalization of geographical, military, and racial borders as well: without its annexation, the Gulf, the Mississippi, the Sabine, the Red River, New Orleans, and indeed "the rest of the Union" were all vulnerable to a foreign power, in "immediate contact with sixty thousand Indian warriors of our own, and with the very many thousand of the fiercest savage tribes in Texas, there to be armed and equipped for the work of death and desolation."⁵⁴ Furthermore, as Walker put it – in an article cited in the *Democratic Review* – Texas abounded in lush vegetative potential: "The climate was delicious . . . The grape, the olive, and indigo and cocoa, and nearly all the fruits of the tropics will be grown there also . . . [in] a soil of the finest and most fertile character."⁵⁵ In this luxuriant garden grew not only the mixed Mexican population that Walker cast as poisonous but a thriving Anglo citizenship, the very "flower of our gallant Southern and Western chivalry."⁵⁶

It is worth noting again that the preface to "Rappaccini's Daughter" refers directly to the *Democratic Review* itself – the larger venue in which all of these matters were addressed – as having "for some years past led the defense of liberal principles and popular rights with faithfulness and ability worthy of all praise."⁵⁷ Supported by leading politicians from the radical wing of the Democratic Party, the journal was founded by John L. O'Sullivan, who had sought out Hawthorne as a regular contributor on the advice of Democratic Congressman Jonathan Cilley. Having laid a specific agenda for the *Democratic Review* with his brother-in-law Samuel Langtree, O'Sullivan envisioned an intimate relation between political and literary ideologies, between "the spirit of liberty" and "the literary spirit," between great literature and that which is "essentially democratic."⁵⁸ Liberty

and democracy, as he saw them, were inextricable from US expansion; and he used the paper accordingly as a forum for different proponents of annexation – not only of Texas but also of Cuba, where his sister had married a conservative planter in favor of US incorporation. By the start of the US-Mexican War, O'Sullivan had left the journal and launched two failed projects from New York: first to buy Cuba from Spain and then, as we saw in the previous chapter, to conquer it through a filibustering mission. His famous editorial praising US imperialism in the Americas and coining the phrase “Manifest Destiny” appeared in 1845, just one year after the journal's publication of “Rappaccini's Daughter” and two years after its reviews of *Life in Mexico* and *Travel in Yucatan*.⁵⁹

Given such a climate in the US public sphere, it comes as no surprise that Calderón's travel account, in particular, provoked heated controversy in Mexico, even before it was published there. The newspaper *Siglo Diez y Nueve* decided to print a serial translation of the book into Spanish to confront and quell what it termed “public anxiety,” but the government-sponsored journal, *Diario del Gobierno de la República Mexicana*, found *Life in Mexico* so explosive that it immediately attempted to suppress the *Siglo's* publication.⁶⁰ The *Diario* argued that Calderón's book represented a potentially dangerous betrayal of her husband's diplomatic position and a profound insult to the Mexican nation. “We only want justice for Mexico, and that her circumstances be not disfigured or corrupted,” explained the *Diario*, asserting that her book was “formed with the same intent as Gulliver's travels, to transform great men into pygmies.”⁶¹ In one impassioned editorial, the *Diario* spoke of the progress that Calderón had failed to document in her account of life in Mexico and asked what she might have seen had she visited fifty years earlier: “Men of an elevated position in society who would have asked her if she were an Englishwoman from London or from Paris.” But now, the editors proclaimed proudly, “[t]he French language has become popular to the point of being indispensable to the education of the young: inside of twenty years French will be spoken in the salons of Mexico as in those of St. Petersburg.”⁶² Calderón's writing, it seems, unsettled in this *Diario* editorial the same aspirations toward a European scene that we find throughout “Rappaccini's Daughter,” purported translation of M. de l'Aubépine. Betraying its own anxiety of postcolonial hybridity – linguistic rather than botanical – the editorial declares that “the defects of the colonial language are disappearing, thanks to the pen of some distinguished grammarians.”⁶³

Outside Mexico, Calderón's subsequent return to Cuba provoked controversies of its own. In the final section of her book, Calderón writes

that when she and her husband left Mexico again by way of Havana, they turned down an offer to stay at the palace of the colonial administration's Captain-General, and opted instead to return to the Casa Hechavarría, site of her first "astonished" reaction to the marriage between a Spanish colonial official and the woman she had earlier termed "a little wild-looking mulatto." Calderón does not explain the reasons for their decision in her journal, which notes merely that Hechavarría "came on board [the boat] and kindly insisted on taking us to his house" (624). But the Calderóns' return to the Hechavarría residence was greeted even at the time with a certain degree of anxiety in the United States, whose relation to Cuba in the 1840s was growing increasingly tense with the rise of antislavery struggles within the Spanish colony.⁶⁴ While neither Calderón nor her husband had any connection to these struggles, their return visit coincided with the moment of the Escalera.⁶⁵ It was in the ensuing climate of paranoia surrounding Cuba that a southern US diplomat, Thomas Reynolds, prepared a detailed report five years after the fact of the Calderón "soujourn in the house of Señor Hechivarria [*sic*]." Reynolds accused Angel Calderón of desiring to be "Spy-in-Chief in the Ethiopico-Cuban Republic" and characterized Frances Calderón as an abolitionist who "entirely controlled her husband."⁶⁶ Reynolds was of course wrong to connect the Calderóns' return to the Casa Hechavarría to either espionage or abolitionism. Nevertheless, the transformation in Calderón's attitude toward her former hosts is unmistakable as the journal nears its conclusion. After two and a half years outside the United States, she now recalls "so hospitable a reception on our first visit" and finds "everything as elegant and comfortable as before . . . surrounded by our former friends" (624). Her initial discomfort in the place she had earlier called "this military, monkish, Spanish Negroland" (21) and her anxious speculations as to the lack of "*sang pur*" on the island have receded with distance and time away from the immediate influences of "racial Anglo-Saxonism" and its obsession, in Hawthorne's phrase, with "commixture, and . . . adultery."

As a compilation of travel letters recording its author's observations of life in colonial Cuba and postcolonial Mexico, Calderón's book may well have reminded Hawthorne of his wife Sophia Peabody's letters from Cuba, written between 1833 and 1835 and then collected and circulated as a volume by her family. Though never officially published, the volume apparently impressed Hawthorne deeply enough that he copied sixteen entries from it into his own journal between 1837 and 1841.⁶⁷ Replete with Peabody's descriptions and sketches of indigenous plants and flowers – including the "wild night blooming Cereus" that, as Claire Badaracco remarks, would

not seem out of place “among Beatrice’s deadly gems”⁶⁸ – the journal documents her stay on a coffee plantation where, far from New England, she witnessed Cuban slavery firsthand.

Hawthorne’s interest in his wife’s letters prompted her sister Mary Peabody to suggest that he write a novel of slavery and Cuban plantation life based on the journal – a fictional challenge he chose never to undertake. Instead, Hawthorne’s most influential public writing on slavery appeared in the campaign biography he penned in 1852 for Franklin Pierce, a devout proponent of expansionism who had served as a general in the US-Mexican War that followed the US annexation of Texas and who would, as President, attempt unsuccessfully to purchase Cuba from Spain. Responsible for Hawthorne’s employment as Salem Custom House surveyor, Pierce would reward the author of his biography with a consulship in Liverpool after the election. Hawthorne used the volume to promote Pierce as an “unshaken advocate of the Union” in his support of the Compromise of 1850, which had in part addressed conflicts over slavery in the territories gained by the United States during the US-Mexican War, in which Pierce himself, the biography reminds, had led “his fellow-citizens, his brethren” in the patriotic shedding of “their kindred blood.” Defending Pierce’s staunch opposition to abolition, Hawthorne acknowledged that slavery was an “evil” but one not “to be remedied by human contrivances,” which would cause both “the aggravated injury of those whose condition [abolition] aimed to ameliorate” and “the ruin of two races which now dwelt together in greater peace . . . than had ever elsewhere existed between the taskmaster and the serf.” Abolitionists, Hawthorne concedes, “can scarcely give their sympathy or their confidence to the subject of this memoir.” But “the lover of his race,” he urges, “might lend his aid to put [such] a man . . . into the leadership of the world’s affairs.”⁶⁹

EL FILIBUSTERO: THE YUCATECAN LITERARY TERRAIN OF
JUSTO SIERRA O’REILLY

In 1847, while Hawthorne was serving his Democratic appointment as surveyor for the Salem Custom House, and while Pierce was serving as a general in the US-Mexican War, the Mexican author and diplomat Justo Sierra O’Reilly began a one-year mission in Washington, D.C., to campaign for US aid to his homeland in Yucatán – a disputed territory that then considered itself independent of the Mexican Republic. Crossing paths with a number of the intellectual figures covered thus far in this study – including Frances Calderón and Stephens, as well as Prescott – Sierra absorbed there an

obsession with racial purity that would dramatically change the course of his literary and political career, further highlighting the tangled transamerican trajectories of Hawthorne's tale. Designated by some Latin Americanists as Mexico's first historical novelist, as well as the forebear of a specifically Yucatecan literary tradition, Sierra, like Hawthorne, sought to establish a national body of belles lettres, an authentically American literature equal in stature to but decisively independent from its European counterparts.⁷⁰ And like Hawthorne, Sierra initially reviled topical matters as unworthy of the literary domain. In 1841, six years before his trip to the United States, he launched *El Museo Yucateco*, a journal devoted to the dissemination of art and culture that critics would later designate as a point of origin for a specifically Yucatecan literary history. In the first issue, he promised readers that its pages would contain "not one word of politics."⁷¹

Apparently sharing Hawthorne's ambivalence for "Indian" subject matter, Sierra, too, sought to create what he perceived as an indigenous American literature, rooted in Yucatecan history and legend – yet with little or no reference to the Mayan cultures that, in his own moment, comprised some 80 percent of the larger Yucatán population. Sierra's elision of a Mayan presence in the Yucatecan histories he sought to represent in literature remained consistent during these years. As Ermilo Abreu Gómez noted long ago, the few Mayan characters who appear in the fiction that Sierra wrote before his sojourn in the United States conform to the "*buen salvaje*" model initiated by Rousseau; lacking intention and agency, his fictional Indians share an absence of individuality manifested in the repetition of their shared first name, Juan: Juan Cruyes, Juan Hinestrosa, Juan Perdomo. The lack of individual will that Sierra implied in these characters derived in part, Abreu Gómez suggests, from what he understood as Mayan philosophy itself: for "[t]he Mayan Indian believes that destiny cannot be altered by the forces of man."⁷² In this sense, Sierra's refusal to lend his few Indian figures any characterization proves paradoxically linked to a certain literary investment in what he understood to be one of the foundational precepts of Mayan belief, however uninterested he appeared to be in actual matters of Indian history.

Sierra's historical novella from this period, *El filibustero*, precedes "Rappaccini's Daughter" by three years. Like Hawthorne's tale, it is a work pervaded by classical European allusions that nevertheless draws on transamerican legend and history to create its story. As in the text of "Rappaccini's Daughter," moreover, the transatlantic intertextuality deployed in *El filibustero* is also a means by which the novella embeds its preoccupation with the very Indian presence it also elides. The central character

of the novella, the titular filibuster who plagues the Yucatán coastal city of Campeche, is Diego *el mulato*, a seventeenth-century pirate documented in several histories of Yucatán and the West Indies from the seventeenth century and afterwards. Sierra's larger project in these years was to establish a literary history of Yucatán; to this end, he wrote numerous novels about the Yucatán past and edited and oversaw the publication of a number of historical works, including Diego López de Cogolludo's important *Historia de Yucatán*, originally written in 1688, which was also one of his historical sources for the figure of Diego *el mulato*.⁷³ However, Sierra blurs the boundaries between history and legend in *El filibustero*, as his two subtitles indicate: the first one parenthetical ("Leyenda del Siglo XVII"), followed by the announcement of the second: "NOVELA HISTORICA." Appearing to resolve this generic contradiction, a footnote appended to the title (as it appears on the first page of actual text) asserts that "[t]his legend is completely historical, almost down to its most insignificant circumstances."⁷⁴ Lending a certain scholarly veneer to the first page of the novella – though it turns out to be in fact the single footnote in the text – this pronouncement is also patently false on a number of counts, as Sierra was surely aware. Yet the footnote suggests not that Sierra knowingly misrepresented history as it was documented in his sources, primarily that of López de Cogolludo, but that he understood legend as a means of interpreting the past – and the legend of Diego *el mulato* in particular as an interpretive key, perhaps especially in "its most insignificant circumstances," to reading the history of his own Yucatán.

As the second part of his name suggests, Diego was a mixed-race pirate, of partial African as well as European descent. His historical origins and background are murky, as are the reasons for his famous attack on Campeche, though there is some speculation that it was partially motivated by the pirate's desire for revenge on its governor, by whom he had once been employed and then mistreated. Most historical sources do agree, however, that Diego was a Cuban pirate, born in Havana rather than in Mexico or any part of Yucatán. Yet the unlikely choice of Diego *el mulato* as the central figure for his historical novella *El filibustero* allowed Sierra obliquely to confront the issue of New World racial hybridity through a mixed-race character – a "mulatto" onto whom he could displace his own more pressing anxieties of Yucatecan *mestizaje*, the Indian-Spanish racial and cultural mixture that inevitably informed the Yucatán Peninsula, greater Mexico, and by extension, the wider realm of Latin America.

Like Beatrice, the deadly product of her father's "commixture, and . . . adultery" – a figure "worthiest to be worshipped" who would "minister to

her patients with draughts . . . but woe to him that sips them!" – Sierra's Diego *el mulato* is "the exterminating angel from the mysterious book of the apocalypse," "the damned archangel" presiding over Campeche's doomed future (41). Just as Beatrice loves Giovanni, the untainted visitor to her cross-bred garden, Diego loves Conchita, the novella's fragile embodiment of Spanish Creole purity, both racial and sexual. Like Giovanni's inexorably tragic obsession with Beatrice, Conchita's inevitable demise as a result of her passion for Diego is represented as a "lost innocence," a "wounded imagination," a "vehement fire" (21): like Giovanni, Conchita "does not know what her beloved is" but senses "in this love . . . something horrible, something irregular"; she is drawn onto "the path of perdition" (26). As does "Rappaccini's Daughter," moreover, Sierra's novella promotes a series of correspondences between toxicity and racial hybridity. Before he meets Conchita, Diego *el mulato* has "drunk from the briny water of a swamp" (7); and in loving her, Sierra's narrator warns, Diego assaults an "angel of . . . purity," injecting her with "a lethal venom, a fatal poison that circulates with violence in her veins, and that goes gradually destroying the principle of life" ("un letal veneno, una ponzoña mortífera que circula con violencia por sus venas, y que va gradualmente destruyendo el principio de la vida") (22). How can Conchita, "daughter of such noble parents, the greatest beauty of Campeche, the most valuable jewel of her family, love Diego *el mulato*, of such low origins . . . ?" asks her rejected suitor Don Fernando. "Since when have tigers been able to mix with lambs, doves with serpents?" (45).

Reproductive anxiety and a horror of mixture suffuse the novella from its opening page, where the frightened Campechanos bemoan the arrival of Diego *el mulato*, who will "rob you and insult you" as surely as he will "rape your daughters" (5). The sounds of his attack are "a hymn to Bacchus . . . the song of foreigners who celebrate their horrible triumph in the middle of an orgy" (9). That he is feared for his status as a mulatto as much as or more than for his status as a pirate becomes apparent through the text's most explicit literary allusions: to Cervantes and the short novels of moral example and illicit love set in the Spanish-Moorish borderlands; and to Victor Hugo's *Hans d'Islande*, a historical novel that Sierra virtually adapts to *El filibustero*, borrowing a number of details characterizing the feared criminal Hans of Iceland, who destroys masses of victims in a fire (as does Diego), and who kills for killing's sake alone. Moreover, Hugo's novel overtly thematizes the secret adulteries and ultimate indeterminacy of kinship that lie at the heart of the Campechanos' repulsion from Diego in Sierra's work. While Hans is a literal monster in Hugo's account, rumored

to be a giant from the hinterlands, Diego's white father addresses him as a racial "monstruo" (13); he is a child born "in crime" who, in loving the Creole Conchita ("Yo amo, amo, padre mío, a esta hermosísima criatura"), commits "a new and more horrendous crime" even than his father has committed (15).

But like "Rappaccini's Daughter," Sierra's vexed allegory of race displaces its own particular anxieties of commixture by projecting onto the figure of *el mulato* the elided Indian presence within the tale, and thus its own preoccupation with the history of *mestizaje* on which Yucatán was founded. The symptoms of this displacement begin to emerge after the narrator claims that the "poisonous" Diego "had eaten the flesh of an Indian of the Río-Lagartos" (7). This early pronouncement lends Diego from the outset a kind of fleshly connection to the indigenous population of Yucatán, suggesting that through his cannibalism he literally now has "Indian" blood within him. Soon afterward, the novella reveals that Diego has already murdered Conchita's father, Valerio Mantilla, *encomendero de Champotón* – that is, the overseer of a great plantation where Mayan slaves labor in the fields, under brutal and often fatal conditions. What is the connection between Diego and the Yucatecan Indians, and how does *un mulato* come to be a part of this imagined history – not a Cuban interloper, but an intimate of the Campechanos, against whom he avenges "a certain insult received in the street" (6)?

In fact, the novella makes it entirely possible to construct an indigenous genealogy for Diego that is first registered in the elliptical conversations he has with his father, an old fisherman who lives alone near the town:

Some said he was Italian, others Portuguese, and some took him to be Dutch. In truth, no one likely knew. Around the year 1625, he had arrived in the country, and since then lived tranquilly without causing harm . . . He had no relations with anyone from the town, as his place of living, his figure, his manners, and his character made him absolutely incommunicative.

(Algunos decían que era italiano, otros portugués, y algunos lo hacían pasar por holandés. Lo cierto nadie lo sabía acaso. Allí por el año de 1625 se había presentado en el país, y desde entonces vivía tranquilo sin hacer mal . . . No tenía relaciones con persona alguna de la villa, pues su habitación, su figura, sus maneras y su carácter, lo hacían absolutamente incommunicativo.) (12–13)

Like Diego's, the fisherman's origins and history are also uncertain. But the Campechanos' speculations indicate that he is a European rather than a Creole, and that he is cut off from Campechan society, whether by choice or by other circumstances. And though he lives now "sin hacer mal," Diego's

rebukes reveal that the old fisherman, too, once lived as a criminal: “‘Yes, my father . . . You have given me my being in crime . . . You inclined me to robbery, murder, and piracy. You developed in me the seed of all crimes and iniquities’” (14–15). A filibuster himself, Diego’s European father would have been known in his own time as a buccaneer, one of the seventeenth-century piratical adventurers who raided ships and Spanish colonies along the American coastline. The buccaneers often took refuge on the Mosquito Coast that lay south of the Yucatán Peninsula, and there they mixed with an indigenous group of Misquite Indians that had incorporated fugitive African slaves from a ship that crashed on their coast (and that continued to take in fugitive slaves from nearby locations through the ensuing generations). The Mosquitoes, as these coastal people came to be known, were thus descended from indigenous as well as African and European origins. Future generations of buccaneers continued to use the coast as a home base for their piratical adventures; they are reported often to have raped or “taken favors from” the Mosquito women, and often to have brought the young Mosquito men, sometimes their own grown offspring, on board their ships to assist in their raids. They commonly sailed the Bay of Campeche and pillaged Yucatán, which housed a rich store of timber.

When Diego’s father calls his scion *un monstruo*, Diego reminds him that “I was born in crime” – that the old buccaneer long ago ruined his mother’s life (“arrancásteis la vida de mi madre” [15]). And “with no other motive than for being of a different color than your own,” Diego adds: “there is yet another crime” – as if to observe that the sexual coercion of an indigenous woman constitutes a double violation (indeed, the precise historical violation that Octavio Paz himself would later represent as the origin of Mexican history itself). The former pirate is “an odious but unfortunate father” (13), who accordingly lives apart from the Campeche society that repudiates his son’s maternal ancestry, denying its own historically indigenous maternity, its own racial and cultural *mestizaje*. This rejection perhaps accounts for the Campechanos’ derisive name for Diego’s father: “*el pescador brujo*,” “the sorcerer fisherman.” Like Beatrice’s father in Hawthorne’s tale, Diego’s father has associations with the occult and the magical; he embraces the power of storms and speaks mysteriously about *fatalidad*, or destiny. In his first appearance in the novella, when he walks late at night in the darkness of the rainy shore, he hears “a signal very well known to him – a choked cry similar to the call of a crow” (13). When the call sounds again, the old *brujo* puts out his light and waits, knowing that, after so much time (“tanto tiempo!”) he is about to see his *mestizo* son, Diego *el mulato* – a mixture, the novella allows us to speculate, of not only

African and European but also Indian origins, collectively forming what the character Don Fernando calls the racial "costume that I still cannot remove" (31).

The tragedy of *El filibustero*, and of the hybrid scapegoat embodied in Diego *el mulato*, is thus the tragedy of a rejected cultural inheritance, and of the larger enmity among races in Yucatán that this rejection represents. "You yourself gave me motive" (14), Diego tells his father in a statement that at once accounts for his piracy and foreshadows his future abduction of Conchita, in the chapter entitled "*El rapto*." The phrase, of course, evokes both the rape of Diego's mother and the sexual violation that the Campechanos believe that Diego will commit upon the body of Conchita. But the Campechanos are wrong about the latter: Diego loves Conchita and has in fact sacrificed his piratical mission as well as his men's and his own safety to save her family; and she returns his love. In the final scene of the novella, Diego's father dies in a boat crash, leaving Diego both orphaned and, in some sense, potentially free from the past, free to create a new future out of the legacy of his mother's rape. In the storm surrounding their boat, Diego and Conchita embrace, and declare their love to be pure: "You are my wife!" cries the pirate. "Yes! Until death!" she responds" (50). Unlike the ending of Hugo's *Hans d'Islande*, however, which announces that the lovers' marriage "sprang the race" of a new nation, the denouement of Sierra's novella cannot witness Conchita and Diego enacting any such creation.⁷⁵ The Campechano Creoles cannot embrace the *mestizo* figure of Diego *el mulato* – though he clearly embodies the spirit of Yucatán nationalism that Sierra sought to cultivate in the public sphere during this period.

During the very years in which Sierra wrote and published *El filibustero*, Mexico had refused to recognize the federalist government in Yucatán – referring to its military boats precisely as pirate ships.⁷⁶ Resurrecting a historical pirate who can speak to Yucatecan independence, Sierra stages a scene in which Diego *el mulato* urges the Campechanos not to give in to moral cowardice: "Your houses are prey of the fire, your interests are lost, your families are perishing, and you're like chickens here [in the street]!" (43), he warns them just after he has saved Conchita's (and her family's) life. A Yucatecan pirate not only to the homeland upon which he seeks revenge but also to greater Mexico, Diego paradoxically represents the sole hope for Yucatán's future independence and political survival. But the Campechanos hasten to prevent his legitimate union with Conchita, or the mixing of what they see as high and low racial origins. In the conclusion of the novella, where she has become a madwoman ("*una señora demente*," "*una infeliz loca*") [53]), Conchita – a diminutive for Concepción (also the name of

Sierra's daughter) – cannot live up to the procreativity implied within her own name. As in “Rappaccini's Daughter,” there is no continuation of life after the hybrid figure's inevitable death. An allegory of failed union between the indigenous and Spanish populations of Yucatán, Sierra's novella thus confronts the insidious colonial history within which the author's son, the writer and activist Justo Sierra Méndez, would later locate the “fatal germs of dissolution” that falsely divided Yucatán into “two races of mortal enemies.”⁷⁷ And in this sense, *El filibustero* also foretold the tragic future of death and madness that was still to come in Sierra's lifetime: Yucatán's Guerra de Castas.

The Guerra de Castas, or Caste War, broke out in 1847, during the US-Mexican War. Yucatán had declared itself neutral in the matter of the latter conflict, still claiming its independence from centralist Mexico and thus refusing aid in the defense against the northern aggressor – a refusal that in effect cost the Mexican government any chance of victory.⁷⁸ In fact, the United States had taken full advantage of Yucatecan hostility to Mexico by occupying Yucatán's Isla del Carmen, where Commodore Matthew Perry first shut down a major port, imposed duties to discourage its use, and deployed it as a US naval base during the war. On the night of July 30, 1847, however, it became clear to the Yucatecans that they needed their port back again in order to struggle with their own internal political problems. That night, after centuries of varying degrees of brutal mistreatment by Spaniards and their descendants, several thousand Mayan Indians attacked the Yucatán village of Tepich, killing some three hundred Creole Yucatecans. The slaughter marked the onset of the Caste War, a devastating military conflict between the Mayans and the Spanish-descended elite that would destroy both Yucatán's economy and from 30 to 40 percent of its population. Though the state government would eventually subdue the Mayan revolts throughout most of the peninsula by 1853, the Caste War continued in the form of rebel strongholds that occupied the southeastern parts of Yucatán until the beginning of the next century, in 1901. After the massacre on July 30, the Yucatán governor Santiago Méndez saw immediately that he needed the United States to return to his country the use of its port, a vital part of the now-failing Yucatán economy and the Creoles' only means of receiving military aid from a foreign power against the insurgent Mayan Indians. Méndez turned to Sierra – self-designated arbiter of an emergent Yucatán national literary culture and a talented translator of English – to be his Commissioner to the United States. So it was that Justo Sierra – a belle-lettriste who vowed to expunge even “one word of politics” from the work he produced as a writer and editor – found himself

suddenly catapulted into an international and ultimately scandalous political quagmire, undertaking a diplomatic mission to Washington, D.C., to publicize Yucatán's plight in the Caste War and to plead for US cooperation in the matter of the Isla del Carmen port.⁷⁹

In the literary and political atmosphere of the United States, Sierra's understanding of Yucatán, its Mayan Indians, its racial identity, and (what Mexico had cast as) its "piratical" spirit of independence from foreign intervention – what Sierra himself had represented in the fierce but finally noble piracy of Diego *el mulato* – would change forever. A number of writers were to become lasting influences, including Washington Irving, whose popular, semifictionalized account of Columbus's life and voyages shed romantic light across the inception of Spanish imperialism in the Americas; and Cooper, whose *The Last of the Mohicans* provided a literary model of what US policy was by then terming Indian "removal"; and, though there is no official record of it, possibly Hawthorne himself, who was then commuting from Salem to Boston, where Sophia and the children were staying, and which Sierra visited in February 1848.⁸⁰ It was within this literary climate that news arrived of the defeat of Mexico in the US-Mexican War, which had begun over the question of Texas. Mexico's official position on Texas had changed since the years before and immediately after its independence, when the government had approved the immigration of Anglo-American settlers – in part to help with what it saw as the problem of an intractable Indian population in the region. Filibustering expeditions led by Anglos into Mexico soon proved to be as much of a problem.⁸¹ By the end of the official war, as we have seen, the United States had annexed not only Texas but also California and New Mexico, in total over one-third of Mexico's former national territory. In this cultural and political atmosphere of fervent Manifest Destiny, Sierra received news of his brother's death in another attack by the Mayans.

"I have always had pity for the poor Indians," he wrote in his diary in April 1848 from the United States. "Their condition pained me, and more than once I have made efforts to improve it, so that they could relieve themselves of some of the burdens that seemed to me very onerous. But those savages! Shameless brutes who are bathed in blood, in fires and destruction. I wish today that this cursed race would disappear and never return to appear again among us."⁸² Later, Sierra would specifically designate "the Anglo-Saxon mode of civilization," with its policies of Indian removal and extermination, as "the best means of creating a liberal and peaceful society."⁸³ In grief and growing desperation for the fate of his community, he saw what seemed the only possible solution in a country whose political policies of expansion

he was quickly internalizing: in a series of clandestine meetings and secret alliances, Sierra began a campaign to solicit the US government's military intervention into and subsequent annexation of his home country.

Sierra's attempt to foster a US annexation of Yucatán was virtually unknown to historians until the early twentieth century, when Carlos R. Menendez discovered documents revealing this agenda in a US archive.⁸⁴ *Diario de nuestro viaje a los Estados Unidos*, Sierra's journal of his sojourn in the United States – which carefully avoids mention of his own participation in plans for annexation, and which he subsequently published in Yucatán in 1849 – documents numerous meetings with President Polk and Secretary of State Buchanan, as well as many other US politicians, who offer both sympathy for the white Yucatecan elite and ambiguous promises to send some form of help.⁸⁵ But the post-war Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo complicated any official position the United States could take with respect to the annexation of Yucatán without offending Mexico, and the US Congress proved rightly suspicious that any military aid offered to Yucatán might open the door to expansionist aspirations for that territory. Both Polk and Buchanan ultimately reneged on their promises and betrayed Sierra's interests, the President indignantly summoning him to disavow the "perfidious idea of wanting to annex Yucatán" of which his adversaries in Congress had accused him, and the Secretary of State going so far as to leak Sierra's secret correspondence about annexation to the press in a manner that shed unflattering light on the Yucatán diplomat's position.⁸⁶ (If Polk and Buchanan recognized the political inefficacy of annexing Yucatán, however, they do not appear to have lost any of their former expansionist fervor; in 1854, after Hawthorne's successful campaign biography had been published and Pierce elected to the presidency, Buchanan was sent as one of the three US ministers to produce the Ostend Manifesto, the secret but ultimately unsuccessful plan formed in Ostend, Belgium, to purchase Cuba from Spain or to take the island by force, which was eventually discovered by the press and denounced as a plot to extend slavery.)

Yet it was finally the US press that proved most detrimental to Sierra's campaign for annexation – and most influential to his future activity as a writer and editor in Yucatán. Sierra came to Washington accustomed to working within the genre of literary journalism he had helped to cultivate in Yucatán, where he had tried to keep politics separate from the periodicals through which he sought to disseminate a national Yucatecan literary culture. In the United States, however, Sierra was immediately confronted with hard lessons in the uses of political journalism and the powerful rhetoric of the polemical editorial when a number of influential newspapers

undertook vigorous campaigns against his mission to secure aid for (and the possible annexation of) Yucatán. "Politics! Damned be politics, and more damned the miserable and meager manner in which some men understand it!" Sierra lamented in his diary after the first article against him appeared, published by the New Orleans Spanish-language newspaper *La Patria*.⁸⁷ Privately, in the pages of his journal, he denounced political journalism, and the "foolish charlatan journalists who shamelessly throw insults and atrocities at us . . . they surely deserve to die on an ignominious hangman's scaffold!"⁸⁸ But Sierra soon recognized that the impact of the press was not to be underestimated – that, as he put it, "the press in this country has a decisive influence in all the affairs of public power; it is the supreme watchman over politics in this country." He resolved accordingly to learn to work within the genre he had earlier abhorred, writing to a number of papers and "procur[ing] through all means possible" the favor of the press.⁸⁹ In the face of widespread opposition to US intervention in Yucatán, however, Sierra's personal media campaign was ultimately unsuccessful. By May 1848, he noted that the newspapers in which he had been publishing his counter-editorials did not want to print his communications any longer: "I have been shut up in my room reading and writing; writing articles that no journalist wants to publish, because they all look at us with mistrust."⁹⁰

The reasons for US politicians' opposition to any government-sponsored interference in Yucatán varied widely, from liberal sympathy with the Mayans' resistance to oppression, to fear of provoking further Mexican hostility, to disapproval of the white Yucatecan elite for what Senator John Calhoun of South Carolina, in a May 1848 edition of Washington's *New Era*, described as "having brought ruin upon themselves, by the policy of having elevated to their own level, in terms of political rights, an inferior race."⁹¹ Most troubling and finally most influential for Sierra, however, was that the very institutionalized racism that he had believed would make the US government an especially effective overseer of its potential Yucatán protectorate turned out to be in fact an important cause of his failed mission. It was journalistic polemic against his own mission that clarified for Sierra a crucial difference between the binaristic racial ideologies of an Anglo-dominated United States and the more fluid (though still brutally practiced) racial hierarchies of his Latin American homeland. As *La Patria* put it, citing from (in order to respond to) the proslavery *Daily Delta* of New Orleans:

. . . the Yucatecos, of a color somewhat whiter than the indigenous people, for being a little different from those they call savages, think they have the right to solicit

aid from a foreign power . . . It is a trick of the degenerate race of Spanish who inhabit the Mexican states to call barbaric and savage those enemies they cannot vanquish . . . If those “savages” are too powerful for the “white” race, it is without doubt because of . . . the imbecility and cowardice of this degenerate race that calls itself white and is not capable of opposing the just resistance.

(. . . los Yucatecos, de color algo más blanco que los indígenas, por ser en corta diferencia menos que los que apellidan salvajes, se creen con derecho a solicitar auxilios de una potencia extranjera . . . es una treta de la raza degenerada de la española que puebla los estados Mexicanos, el llamar bárbaros y salvajes a los enemigos a quienes no pueden vencer . . . si esos salvajes son demasiado poderosos para la raza blanca, es sin duda porque . . . la imbecilidad y cobardía de la raza degenerada que se apellida blanca no es capaz de oponer la debida resistencia.)⁹²

Sierra's diary suggests the extent to which he internalized the virulent racial ideologies of this atmosphere. “For Yucatán to save itself, it is not enough that a US expedition go temporarily [within the country],” he wrote in a desperate entry that May. “It is necessary that [the US] arbitrate some means of permanently having a white population.”⁹³ These ambiguous means would obviously include annexation as well as what he later refers to in his journal as “a plan for wide-scale colonization in order to attract [white] foreigners.”⁹⁴ But such means also included what Sierra learned from the national authors of the United States to think of as the inevitable disappearance of the Indian, through removals (or exterminations, as he came to call them) that might be supported, poeticized, and celebrated in various literary genres. With newfound anxieties about the fragile status of whiteness in his homeland, and with a now-entrenched urge to reject the indigenous inheritance of Yucatán earlier embodied in his own character Diego *el mulato*, Sierra returned to Campeche.

Sierra thus arrived in Yucatán in August 1848 possessed of an urgent desire to consolidate what he now perceived as the region's dangerously fluid racial borders. As an integral part of this project, he set about producing the first Spanish translation of Stephens's *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*, a text that indirectly supported his mission of US annexation and the removal of indigenous populations that he hoped would result. It is worth recalling here that one of the premises of Stephens's popular narrative was the virility of the Anglo-American traveler in Yucatán highlighted against the degradation of the contemporary Mayan Indians.⁹⁵ Sierra crucially dissented, however, from Stephens's view of the origins of the Mayan ruins in Yucatán: while Stephens held that these majestic remains represented the legacy of the ancient ancestors of the Mayans themselves, Sierra vehemently claimed them as part of a *nonindigenous* cultural inheritance registering Yucatecan

patriotism and cultural nationalism. This deliberate misattribution served in part to justify Sierra's journalistic campaign aimed at the extermination of the Mayan Indians, a genocidal project that was largely responsible for immediate changes in governmental policies regarding the indigenous populations of the peninsula.

Perhaps the most staggering of these new policies involved a historical scandal that remained uncovered by historians of Yucatán until the early twentieth century: the covert sale of Mayan Indians to Cuba, where they served as slaves on sugar and coffee plantations. The purpose of these sales – from the Cuban slave traders' point of view – was to replace the fresh importations of Africans that had by then been outlawed by international treaty and, though they did continue illegally, were harder to orchestrate than the quick voyages from Yucatán across the Caribbean Sea to the Spanish colony. From the Yucatán government's point of view, the sale of Mayan Indians as slaves offered a tidy and profitable alternative to extermination of the rebels – a Yucatán-based “peculiar institution” that was clearly modeled in part on what Sierra had observed on his visit to the United States. But if the Mayan slave trade between Yucatán and Cuba was deliberately kept from the public eye by both governments – and was overlooked by or unknown to more than a half-century of historians – its existence was nevertheless recorded for posterity within some of the very transamerican literary genealogies that are the subject of this book. Martin Delaney explicitly documented these sales in *Blake* when he depicted in Cuba a triumphant uprising against the Spanish and Creole elite of “Negroes, mulattoes and quadroons, [and] Indians” – explaining in a footnote that for “many years the Yucatán Indians taken in war by the Mexicans were sold into Cuba as slaves.”⁹⁶ And as we saw in the previous chapter, even the odd, haunting question posed suggestively within William Cullen Bryant's and Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda's much earlier works, “A Tale of the Island of Cuba” and *Sab* – how could there be Indians in nineteenth-century Cuba, where the indigenous population had long since been destroyed? – raised the possibility that the trade had in fact preceded Sierra's visit to the United States: that, as Bryant's narrator put it, “a fierce, untamable [Indian] nation of Mexico” had “by some unknown means . . . found their way to the island.”

Bryant thus touches only obliquely on a vexing historical scandal that Delaney would confront head on. Like Bryant, Hawthorne, too, preferred for his fictional work, as he writes in the preface to “Rappaccini's Daughter,” “the aspect of scenery and people in the clouds” (91) – as if in this apolitical imaginative world the social realities of his time would magically disappear like the institution of slavery that he so famously predicted in

the Pierce campaign biography would “vanish like a dream” (352). Yet it seems clear, at the very least, that “Rappaccini’s Daughter” cannot fully awaken from this dream nor escape the Mexican genealogies embedded within its own textual past and future – the faint but indelible traces of the transamerican histories that the tale itself steadfastly elides. It is these same traces that are recovered and foregrounded in Octavio Paz’s dramatic revision of “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” a text that responds to some of the very political and historical resonances of Hawthorne’s tale by returning covertly, like its US predecessor, to its own American arena.

LA HIJA DE RAPPACCINI: OCTAVIO PAZ AND
THE ALLEGORY OF HISTORY

More than a century after the initial publication of Hawthorne’s story, Octavio Paz found in “Rappaccini’s Daughter” a narrative through which he, too, appears to “take higher ground” from his own nation and its literature. *La hija de Rappaccini*, Paz’s only play, was first performed on July 30, 1956, in the Teatro del Caballito in Mexico City. A little-discussed part of his oeuvre, the play took part in the series *Poesía en voz alta*, which also included the works of Jean Genet, Eugène Ionesco, and other notable European dramatists. At the time of the play’s first performance, Paz himself had returned to Mexico only three years before from a sojourn abroad (in the United States for two years and then in Europe) that had lasted more than a decade, and during which he had abandoned the explicitly political poetics of his earlier years, befriended André Breton, and begun to propound his own vision of surrealism.⁹⁷ Against popular Mexican demand for a “new ‘realism’” that would reflect the country’s historical moment, Paz now believed that in its ideal form poetry would transcend, as Jason Wilson puts it, “the degradation of life, the tyranny of successive time, rationality, ideologies, nationalisms.”⁹⁸ In a Mexican literary scene characterized by intense cultural nationalism, Paz’s works from this period often drew heavy criticism for their surrealism, which immediately associated them with European influence in the eyes of their detractors. “They are contaminated by experiences in other literatures,” one critic of Paz’s writings wrote: “[H]is lyricism does not belong to our land.”⁹⁹

It is thus especially fitting that Paz was drawn in this period to “Rappaccini’s Daughter” – to an imagined Italy where, as Hawthorne wrote in the preface to his other Italian-set work *The Marble Faun*, “actualities would not be so terribly insisted upon, as they are, and must needs be, in America” (3). The “Eden of the present world” figured in both texts appears entirely remote from the American hemisphere, marked by their authors’ aspirations

to transcend national and historical contingency; the surreal Padua of Paz's *La hija de Rappaccini* – located “in whatever electric point of space and in whatever magnetized fragment of time”¹⁰⁰ – mirrors the self-conscious dislocatedness of Hawthorne's text, which, as the narrator hints, may make “little or no reference either to time or space.”¹⁰¹

In the fourth scene of *La hija de Rappaccini*, appearing suddenly in the shadows of the room where Juan sleeps just above Rappaccini's garden, the anonymous Messenger who narrates the drama begins to manipulate the young lover's dreams. Speaking simultaneously to Juan and the audience, the Messenger describes the journey of both hero and viewer through a strange city of glass:

You are marching through a city carved in glass rock. You are thirsty and the thirst engenders geometrical deliriums. Lost in the transparent corridors, you travel over circular plazas, esplanades where melancholy obelisks watch over fountains of mercury, streets that flow into the same street. The walls of glass shut themselves and imprison you; your image repeats a thousand times in a thousand mirrors that repeat a thousand times in another thousand mirrors. Condemned not to leave yourself, condemned to look for yourself in the transparent galleries, always within view, always unreachable: that which is right there, in front of you, that looks at you with supplicating eyes asking you for a signal, a sign of fraternity and recognition, is not you, but your image. Condemned to sleep with your eyes open.

(Marchas por una ciudad labrada en cristal de roca. Tienes sed y la sed engendra delirios geométricos. Perdido en los corredores transparentes, recorres plazas circulares, explanadas donde obeliscos melancólicos custodian fuentes de mercurio, calles que desembocan en la misma calle. Las paredes de cristal se cierran y te aprisionan; tu imagen se repite mil veces en mil espejos que se repiten mil veces en otros mil espejos. Condenado a no salir de ti mismo, condenado a buscarte en las galerías transparentes, siempre a la vista, siempre inalcanzable: ese que está ahí, frente a ti, que te mira con ojos de súplica pidiéntote una señal, un signo de fraternidad y reconocimiento, no eres tú, sino tú imagen. Condenado a dormir con los ojos abiertos.) (29–30)

This surreal scene appears at first as utterly removed from the American hemisphere as Hawthorne's sixteenth-century Paduan garden. The city of glass evoked by the Messenger forms through its “geometrical deliriums” of “transparent corridors,” “circular plazas,” and “streets that flow into the same street” a labyrinth that momentarily imprisons both audience and dreaming Juan. In the maze of glass and “melancholy” shapes, the interlocutors are “condemned not to leave [themselves],” and must exist without sign of “fraternity” or “recognition.” They are caught, in other words, in a labyrinth of solitude, a dramatization of the central image in the essays that comprise Paz's famous collection of the same name.

First performed just six years after the publication of *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, the play that has long been considered a hallmark of Paz's surreal period nevertheless discloses a surprising historicity precisely by recapitulating throughout its nine scenes the central themes of his earlier essays. Through a series of remarkable correspondences with *Labyrinth*, beginning with the image of the labyrinth itself, the play's abstract refashioning of Hawthorne's tale illuminates the obsession with purity informing Hawthorne's own appropriations of Calderón and Stephens. Despite its aspirations to a surrealist universalism, moreover, the play elaborates in its abstractions a dramatization of Mexican colonial history. In this sense, we might say that Paz's play returns the text of "Rappaccini's Daughter" to its American home, to the Mexican landscapes and gardens that Hawthorne found in Calderón's writing and transported to Italy.

"We have been expelled from the center of the earth," Paz writes in *Labyrinth* of the modern era, "and are condemned to search for it . . . in the underground mazes of the labyrinth . . . When we emerge, perhaps we will realize that we have been dreaming" – as are Juan and the audience of *La hija de Rappaccini* in the glass city described by the Messenger – "with our eyes open."¹⁰² With its US predecessor in mind, the play evokes in this scene the particular maze of solitude that Paz attributes in *Labyrinth* very specifically to the North American: "He has built his own world and it is built in his own image: it is his mirror. But he cannot recognize himself in his inhuman objects, nor in his fellows . . . He is alone among his works, lost . . . in a 'wilderness of mirrors.'" Refiguring these images, the play's Messenger conjures a nightmare scene that stands in *Labyrinth* for the North American's isolation in an industrialized world where, as in Rappaccini's garden, his own "creations, like those of an inept sorcerer, no longer obey" (20–21).

Yet if the scene of the glass labyrinth evokes Paz's sense of North American isolation, the geographical indeterminacy of the play itself works more generally to undermine the rhetoric of Western purity propounded within Hawthorne's text. Through the figure of the anonymous Messenger, with neither "name" nor "origin" nor "land" – in whom North, South, East, and West disappear ("the four cardinal points converge in me and in me dissolve" [15]) – the play announces in its opening scene a disregard for the boundaries celebrated by its predecessor. Accordingly, Paz himself, discussing his adaptation of "Rappaccini's Daughter," points not to an ordinary Western author as Hawthorne's inspiration but instead to the story's multiple genealogy, which he charts as an intertextual journey beginning with "the source of [Hawthorne's] sources . . . in India." "From India it

passed to the West," Paz notes, where, rapidly proliferating, stories of a poisonous Indian woman make their way through medieval tales.¹⁰³ For Paz, the treatment of human poisonousness in "Rappaccini's Daughter" thematizes the Puritan views of the body that he believes have structured the history of North American attitudes toward difference, precisely as he describes them in *Labyrinth*: "Every contact is a contamination. Foreign races, ideas, customs, and bodies carry within themselves the germs of perdition and impurity. Social hygiene complements that of the soul and the body" (24). Paz emphasizes that his own adaptation of "Rappaccini's Daughter" – which follows Hawthorne's anecdote, he explains, but "not the text or its meaning" – takes up "another notion of evil and of the body."¹⁰⁴ In this sense, Paz's adaptation develops out of its own critique of Hawthorne's tale, in which the "poisonous" woman embodies precisely this anxiety of "contamination" by "foreign races, ideas, customs."

Seeking to transcend the insular "puritanism" of Hawthorne's story for a more universal realm, Paz presents in his play an extended meditation on what he casts as a transhistorical state of being, transforming Beatrice from the figure of a mid-nineteenth-century US writer's obsession with "commixture" into what he expansively designates in *Labyrinth* as "a living symbol of the strangeness of the universe and its radical heterogeneity": the "feminine condition" (66, 86). Notorious for its pronouncements on an essential femininity – an eternal female essence ensuring, Paz writes, that "every woman, even when she gives herself willingly, is torn open by the man" (80) – Paz's *Labyrinth* has been taken to task often and rigorously for positing "an innate feminine vulnerability," for asserting that "woman's nature is . . . by its very essence always being 'violated.'"¹⁰⁵ It is precisely this "violated" female essence outlined in *Labyrinth* that Beatriz dramatically embodies throughout the play, literalizing the questions and characteristics that symbolically surround Paz's controversial sense of the "feminine condition." "Woman . . . lives apart and is therefore an enigmatic figure," Paz writes in *Labyrinth*. "As such does she hide life within herself, or death?" (66). This is of course the precise question Paz's play, following its source, asks of Beatriz: will her love bring "death or life?"; is she "pure" or "a flask of poison?" (17, 45). Beatriz realizes as well what Paz in *Labyrinth* identifies figuratively as "feminine hermeticism" (66), spatially metaphorized within the play by her existence in the isolated garden, "away from great roads, lost in the immensity of time, condemned not to emerge from [her]self" (51). In the surreal world of the play, Juan imagines her body as a sealed edifice, a symbol of her inscrutability: "I would like to open the wall of your brow . . . to arrive at you, at your center: who are you?" (40). But Juan

will never know for certain because, Paz writes in *Labyrinth*, "woman . . . is a knowledge we will never possess . . . the supreme mystery" (66).

Yet Paz's attempted entry into a timeless and universal realm through his representation of feminine essence does not ultimately succeed. For *La hija de Rappaccini* finds Paz exploring through his adaptation of Hawthorne's tale of "commixture" the very questions of Mexican colonial history and national identity that he confronts explicitly in the essays of *Labyrinth*. Staging its own surreal conquest of Mexico, in which the dominations of colonialism are represented obliquely through the violation of a woman's body, the play features Beatriz as a more historically specific "living symbol" of "heterogeneity," a central figure in *Jicoténcal* and many subsequent cultural productions treating the Spanish Conquest of Mexico and Mexican identity: La Malinche. Famously reinvented by Paz in *Labyrinth*, she embodies, in his controversial formulation, not only Cortés's willing Aztec mistress but also Mexico's original "Chingada," a "Mother forcibly opened, violated or deceived" (79) – or in Gloria Anzaldúa's less euphemistic translation, "the fucked one."¹⁰⁶ The violation of the Chingada's body comes to stand, Paz suggests, for the Conquest of Mexico itself, "which was also a violation, not only in the historical sense but also in the very flesh of Indian women." Thus for Paz La Malinche represents "the Indian women who were fascinated, violated or seduced by the Spaniards"; as the original Chingada, La Malinche is the "violated Mother" of Mexico itself (86). Her name summons both the "heterogeneous nature of the colonial world" (88) and the simultaneous denial of this world, for in the repudiation of La Malinche, Paz writes, "the Mexican breaks his ties with the past, renounces his origins, and lives in isolation and solitude . . . [and] does not affirm himself as a mixture" (87). If La Malinche is Mexico's original Chingada, moreover, the first Chingada of the Western tradition is necessarily Eve. "[A]ll of us," Paz asserts, "by the simple fact of being born of woman, are *hijos de la Chingada*, sons of Eve" (80), and La Malinche herself has accordingly been represented as the "Mexican Eve" (87).

With its "Eden of the present world" overlaying landscapes and gardens appropriated from *Life in Mexico*, Hawthorne's story was thus particularly well suited to an adaptation that abstractly invokes the "Mexican Eve" to allegorize the Conquest of Mexico. While Hawthorne's Beatrice appears with Giovanni as "the maiden of a lonely island . . . conversing with a voyager from the civilized world" (112), in Paz's surreal play the garden becomes, through the Messenger's opening monologue, "the place of the encounter" (16): the site in which the sexual violations of conquest will be performed by "two figures," Juan and Beatriz, whose differences are coded

by images of light and dark, "one the color of day, the other the color of night" (17). While at home in Naples, Juan dreamed as an explorer, "[e]ach night . . . navigated seas without name, between unknown lands, continents of shadow and mist . . . alone in the middle of a black ocean" (19–20). In Rappaccini's domain, Juan's dreams are realized as he encounters a territory that reminds him of his nocturnal voyages, now a waking "nightmare" (20): a garden of "coquetry" (23), plants acting as "[l]overs, embracing like a pair of adulterers" (23), a tree "like the Tree of Paradise" (50), and a seductive Eve figure who desires "a chameleon . . . in order to see it change color" (26). Juan invades this Eden of the New World – "[a]ll his movements are those of an intruder" (36) – and envisions Beatriz's body as a landscape he hopes to explore and be sustained by:

To surround you as a river encircles an island. To travel interminably over your body, to sleep in your breasts, to wake in your throat, to ascend the canal of your shoulder, to lose myself in your nape, to descend to your belly, to lose myself in you in order to find myself on the other shore . . . You have no end.

(Rodearte como el río ciñe a una isla . . . Recorrer interminablemente tu cuerpo, dormir en tus pechos, amanecer en tu garganta, ascender el canal de tu espalda, perderme en tu nuca, descender hasta tu vientre. Perderme en ti, para encontrarme a mi mismo, en la otra orilla . . . Tú no tienes fin.) (38–39)

Reiterating an age-old conflation of land and the female body, aestheticized here in lyrics of love, Paz valorizes Juan's desire to cross Beatriz as if she were the Mexican isthmus itself, as if he could arrive on her Pacific side, claiming it, too, as the eroticized topographical site for the libidinous fantasies of a young explorer from Europe. The play thus enacts a sexualized conquest in which Beatriz figures as La Malinche, the original Chingada of Mexico.

Beatriz's performance as the Chingada becomes clearer still as she responds to Juan's colonialist rhetoric. Hearing Juan's plans, she abruptly remembers "something lost a long time ago, but whose print was indelible, like a secret wound" (39): the indelible trace of conquest that forever marks the Chingada, Paz asserts in *Labyrinth*, with "a wound that never heals" (30). For "chingar," Paz explains in his much-discussed etymological elaboration of the verb, summons "the idea of breaking, of ripping open"; *chingar* is "to injure, to lacerate, to violate – bodies, souls, objects – and to destroy" (76–77). In the final scene of the play, Beatriz describes the violence of her own "encounter" with Juan, who figuratively breaks her ancestral line: "the world opened in two. You uprooted me like a blade of grass, cut my roots, flung me in the air" (51–52). "A cursed island" (50) destroyed by his arrival, Beatriz dies imploring the tree "like the Tree of

Paradise,” “dissolve my bones” (54). In this sense as well, she embodies Paz’s version of the Chingada, “an inert heap of bones, blood and dust” marked solely by her loss of identity: the Chingada “loses her name; she is no one; she disappears into nothingness; she *is* Nothingness” (85–86). Just before she dissolves into herself, Beatriz invokes this same rhetoric of nothingness, pronouncing: “I’m not master of myself, I have no existence of my own, neither body nor soul” (52).

Perhaps most significantly, Beatriz’s lack of an autonomous existence is etymologically inevitable. The Chingada takes her name, Paz explains, from the Aztec word “*xinachtli*” or garden seed (*Labyrinth* 75); likewise, Beatriz laments throughout the play that in her garden – “alone, gathered up inside myself, planted in the center of my being” – “I used to live the life of a seed” (“Vivía la vida de la semilla” [51]). She dramatically embodies, in other words, the literal “*xinachtli*” from which the legendary Chingada derives. The word “*chingada*” evokes as well in *Labyrinth* a loss of memory, for, Paz writes, “[w]hen we shout ‘Viva México, hijos de la chingada!’ we express our desire to live closed off from the outside world and, above all, from the past. In this shout, we condemn our origins and deny our hybridism” (86–87). Thus when the figure of the Chingada that Paz has created in Beatriz nears her death after drinking the fatal potion Juan gives her, she recedes from the world into herself, crying, “I’m falling, falling towards the inside” (54). Like Hawthorne’s Beatrice, she chooses death. But while her US predecessor appears destined to “ascend” to heaven (125), redeemed in her death by the tale’s prevention of poisonous “com-mixture” between the two lovers, Beatriz dies descending into emptiness, unable to touch “the bottom of [her] soul.” As Paz’s figure of the Chingada, her end ensures a forgetting of the past, and she dies crying “dissolve my memory!” (54).

“THE DOPPELGÄNGER IN YOUR PSYCHE”

Writing on “la Chingada (Malinche)” in her 1987 collection *Borderlands*, Gloria Anzaldúa works precisely against the dissolution of memory that Paz locates in both Beatriz and the Aztec woman whom “the Mexican people have not forgiven . . . for her betrayal.”¹⁰⁷ “The worst kind of betrayal,” Anzaldúa writes, “lies in making us believe that the Indian woman in us is the betrayer. We, indias y mestizas, police the Indian in us, brutalize and condemn her.”¹⁰⁸ Anzaldúa’s analysis of the racial ideology implicit in La Malinche’s representation as a betrayer provides as well a concluding perspective on the Mexican genealogy of “Rappaccini’s Daughter” more

generally. In the chapter entitled "Entering Into the Serpent," Anzaldúa writes of having been bitten as a child by a snake: "I barely felt its fangs . . . I felt its heat slide down my body . . . That night I . . . dreamed rattler fangs filled my mouth, scales covered my body. In the morning I saw through snake eyes, felt snake blood course through my body. The serpent, *mi tono* [my animal soul], my animal counterpart. I was immune to its venom. Forever immune" (26). This recollection distantly recalls the "curious circumstance" that Frances Calderón recorded in *Life in Mexico* and that Hawthorne drew upon in creating the story that Paz in turn refashioned in his play. Anzaldúa's description of her response to the snakebite – the scales, snake eyes, snake blood she incorporates – details vividly what Calderón imagined as "*snaky* nature transferred into [one's] composition"; the "rattler fangs" that fill Anzaldúa's mouth in her dream suggest precisely the "poisonous" bite of the people that, as we have seen, Calderón stated unequivocally she would not like to "live amongst." As Calderón heard that such people are "safe from the bite of all venomous animals," Anzaldúa finds herself "[f]orever immune."

For Anzaldúa, however, the bite marks a turning point in her maturation, after which the serpent acquires new and positive meaning for her. If she has since "shunned" the serpent, she has "sought" it, too: like the "great pleasure in fondling [snakes]" that Calderón locates in those who have "impunity," "elation flood[s her] body," along with fear, when the serpent crosses her path (26). For the serpent, as Anzaldúa later explains, "is the symbol of the dark sexual drive . . . the feminine, the serpentine movement of sexuality" (35). The immunity she begins to gain with this early bite is thus not to the literal venom of the snake (her "boot got all the *veneno*" [26], as she points out) but rather to the cross-cultural stigmatization of female sexuality, an aversion that underlies precisely the toxicity of both Hawthorne's Beatrice and Paz's Beatriz. With this immunity, Anzaldúa can "enter into the Serpent [and] acknowledge that I have a body" (26); with this immunity she has "dominion over serpents . . . over my own body, my sexual activity" (51).

Dominion over serpents belongs traditionally, Anzaldúa elaborates, to Coatloapeuh, a deity who appeared in 1531 to an Indian named Cuautlaohuac.¹⁰⁹ Descended from the Mesoamerican goddesses of earlier centuries, Coatloapeuh ("She who has dominion over serpents") shares her association with the snake with Cihuacoatl, a figure who uncannily prefigures Hawthorne's Beatrice: a "Snake Woman" once worshipped as a patroness of vegetation, Cihuacoatl was later feared for "the ability to change herself into a serpent or into a lovely young woman to entice

young men who withered away and died after intercourse with her" (95). Because "*coatl*" or snake was an ubiquitous religious symbol in pre-Columbian America where, Anzaldúa writes, "[s]nake people . . . followed the Serpent's way, identified with the Serpent deity" (34), Coatloopeuh, who became Guadalupe through her homophonic relation to the "dark virgin" (29) worshipped by the Spaniards, is "the central deity connecting us ('la gente Chicana,' the Chicano people) to our Indian ancestry" (27). Anzaldúa's genealogy of this figure thus foregrounds the racialism in Calderón's anthropomorphization of "snaky nature" – and, by extension, in Hawthorne's interpolation of human toxicity into his tale. While Hawthorne's poisonous maiden tending her domain of "serpent-like" plants embodies the "commixture" that Giovanni finds "monstrous," Anzaldúa's Coatloopeuh/Guadalupe is "a synthesis of . . . the religion and culture of the two races in our psyche" who comes to stand in *Borderlands* for what she argues is "the tolerance for ambiguity that Chicanos-mexicanos, people of mixed race, people who have Indian blood, people who cross cultures, necessarily possess" (30).

Throughout a book that switches "from English to Castilian Spanish to the North Mexican dialect to Tex-Mex to a sprinkling of Nahuatl to a mixture of all these," Anzaldúa – as if responding to Hawthorne, who bemoaned the writing of "ink-stained Amazons" yet borrowed without acknowledgment from the female-authored text of *Life in Mexico*; and Paz, whose Malinche-Beatriz is doomed to "have no existence of [her] own, neither body nor soul" – invokes the *coatl* in Guadalupe: "I will have my voice: Indian, Spanish, white. I will have my serpent's tongue – my woman's voice, my sexual voice, my poet's voice" (59). Writing from the geographical, cultural, and linguistic "borderlands" in which the genealogy of "Rappaccini's Daughter" itself resides, Anzaldúa asks of Anglo-America what this chapter has in a sense attempted to ask of Hawthorne's tale: "Admit that Mexico is your double, that she exists in the shadow of this country, that we are irrevocably tied to her. Gringo, accept the doppelgänger in your psyche" (85–86).

*Transamerican theatre: Pierre Faubert
and L'Oncle Tom*

IMPASSE AND IMAGINATION: HAITI IN THE US PUBLIC SPHERE

In September 1855, at the height of the expansionist presidential administration that Hawthorne had helped to usher into Washington with his popular biography of Pierce, *Putnam's Monthly Magazine of American Science, Literature, and Art* featured a long quasi-anthropological article titled "The Amazons of South America."¹ Though published anonymously and treating a rather arcane subject, the article implicates the Mexican genealogy treated in the previous chapter within the historical sources recording the legend of Amazons in the Americas. Printed alongside a review of *Leaves of Grass* that approvingly cites Whitman's commemoration of "the fall of Alamo" during the US-Mexican War, the essay gives us a glimpse of the varied kinds of hemispheric imaginings that this era's many generalist periodicals were circulating in the US public sphere. Synthesizing a number of writings in Spanish and English, the article proposed a Mexican-Caribbean continuum of history and legend that ostensibly "solved" the mysterious questions surrounding these indigenous female warriors by positing the Amazons as the lineal descendants and worshippers of the feathered-serpent god known as Quetzalcoatl, the mythical-historical deity and king who first appeared in the time of the Toltecs. Like the figure discussed at the end of the previous chapter – Coatlalopeuh, or "She who has dominion over serpents" – Quetzalcoatl was descended from the early Mesoamerican goddess Coatlicue, or Serpent Skirt, and retained the goddess's ancient identification with snakes.

According to one of the sources cited in the *Putnam's* article, Quetzalcoatl possessed a number of beautifully cut green stones, which were "preserved with great veneration" by the indigenous groups who continued to worship him generations later; the stones became relics for Quetzalcoatl, the "Buddha of the Mexicans," long after his historical reign.² Similar carved green stones later appeared among indigenous peoples of the Caribbean,

raising fascinating contradictions for the *Putnam's* writer. The West Indian islands, according to the article's citation of Alexander von Humboldt, were not "the native place of the mineral of which [the stones were] composed." More importantly, the writer contends, "It is not the Indians of our day . . . , whom we find in the last degree of barbarism, that pierced such hard substances, giving them the form of animals and fruit. Such works . . . denote anterior civilization."³ Bringing Humboldt's observations to bear on a number of other sources, including Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, the essay hypothesizes finally that the Caribbean stones are identical to the Quetzalcoatl relics: "[This] will, we think, conclusively prove that they were brought from Mexico by the Amazons" – the female warriors known in Sir Walter Raleigh's account, among other South American travel writings, for their possession of "a certain kind of green stone, which the Spaniards call *piedras hijadas*."⁴ Tracing Quetzalcoatl's green stones to the green stones famously possessed by the Amazons to the green stones worn in the West Indies – "because, according to popular belief, they preserve the wearer from nervous complaints, fevers, and the stings of venomous serpents" – the article seeks to account for the legends of Caribbean islands inhabited only by women warriors, recorded by many notable travelers.⁵ As the writer notes, "Columbus, in his Journal, says that on returning from Hayti on his first voyage, he was informed at a place on the north side of it, at which he stopped, that east of it was an island called Carib, (St. Croix), and another, Martinico, (Martinique), which was inhabited only by women; that at a certain time of the year the men of the island Carib visited it, and if a boy was born, these females sent it to their island, if a girl, they took care of it."⁶

Thus, if Gloria Anzaldúa's genealogy views the figure of Coatlatopeuh as a cultural embodiment of a "tolerance for ambiguity" spurned in the collective psyche of US cultural history, which has repressed the irrevocable ties between the United States and Mexico, the 1855 article in *Putnam's* traces a genealogy from Quetzalcoatl to the Amazons that ultimately links ancient Mesoamerica to the nineteenth-century Caribbean.⁷ The result is a pointed interlocking of Mexico, Cuba, Martinique, Guyana, Cayenne, St. Croix, and Haiti in an anthropological relation that the North American scholar could analyze from afar, resolving historical ambiguities and inconsistencies in a neat chronology running from ancient civilization to contemporary savagery. The function of this genealogy proved to be crucial in a journal that devoted many of its pages to the status of the Caribbean vis-à-vis the United States in the years following the US-Mexican War, addressing a larger reading culture that was continuously debating Caribbean

annexations – and producing a virulent discourse surrounding the question of Haiti in particular.

Unlike the contributors to a number of other publications, *Putnam's* writers tended to avoid broaching the Haitian question in the kind of overtly political language that might have been deemed too coarse for a periodical of science and culture. Beneath a propensity for academic documentation and philosophical tone, however, the journal's contributors consistently projected onto Haiti their fears and desires about questions that lay closer to home, attending the shifting geographical and racial boundaries of an expanding United States. In an 1854 essay titled "Hayti and the Haitians," for example, an unidentified travel writer rejoices in having arrived in a place "affording, though so near home, so fresh a field for observation and study" – more in need of "satisfactory views of the state of things . . . than . . . any other part of the world."⁸ Fascinated in particular by the "cultivated and accomplished manners" of the women of Port-au-Prince, unsurpassed by ladies "in any city of the Union," the writer recounts the story of an "American gentleman" who receives into his parlor as a guest "a lady . . . dressed in the highest tone of the country . . . a rich Madras handkerchief about her head, earrings and other jewelry, a dress of the purest white, white satin slippers." To the Anglo resident's shock, the lady then reveals to him that she is actually his servant – "his washwoman!" – beautifully arrayed for one of the many national holidays in which "all classes" participate in "commemorating important events in [Haitian] history."⁹ The episode illustrates the opacity of Haitian social hierarchies to Anglo eyes while evoking a libidinal charge in the Haitian past – "the tragic, well-known 'horrors of St. Domingo'" – that is celebrated in the servant woman's comely attire.¹⁰

Remarking later that foreign priests "of the most desperate and disreputable character have swarmed to the island," the essay translates from a government edict, printed in the official newspaper *Le Moniteur Haitien*, which charges the clergy with widespread abuses of Haitian women who have been hired as housekeepers and forbids them to "retain . . . in their dwellings, in any capacity whatever, young females, unless they are of an age not to be suspected."¹¹ Though the writer is at pains to suggest his gentility, these and other accounts hint at the essay's unspoken erotic investment in what he calls a "central African characteristic of the Haitians": "their almost universal licentiousness."¹² By the essay's conclusion, Haiti is figured as both Eden – the "original garden itself," its "magnificence and beauty" greater than "even . . . Washington Irving[s]" descriptions could convey, its "bountiful products" far surpassing in economic potential "the orchards of western New-York," "the rich rice and cotton fields of the

South,” “the prairie and bottom lands of the West” – and an already fallen Eve, an enticing “Queen of the Antilles” whose “ensanguined” soil may be redeemed only by the subsequent colonial enterprises of her masculine neighbor to the north. “I leave it to others to deduce the lessons that her history suggests,” the piece concludes, “and will not attempt to penetrate the dark veil that hides her future.”¹³

That this future might well include annexation by the United States was widely discussed in contemporaneous US periodicals. Much of this public discussion centered on the figure of Faustin Soulouque, the powerful Haitian leader who transformed his presidency into an emperorship in 1849. In the popular US imagination, Soulouque embodied nothing less than a full-fledged assault on whiteness as ideology. Figured as “an abominable African despot” and a frightening practitioner of religious “barbarism” who kept a “fetish serpent” for “Wodoo” hidden in his throne, Soulouque provided a continuous reminder of potential slave revolts for “planter[s] of the south,” recalling “the trouble and sorrow that conjured servants have caused . . . from time to time.”¹⁴ More urgently, many journalists and politicians understood Soulouque’s colonization of the Dominican Republic – the former Spanish colony of Santo Domingo, which occupied the two-thirds of the island of “St. Domingo,” or Hispaniola, east of Haiti – as a political and military menace to the United States. Transparently equating republicanism with racial whiteness, US periodicals of the 1850s opposed the Haitian government and sensibility – “despotic and fluctuating . . . sensual and barbarous . . . tend[ing] backward to the ancient idolatry or Fetish worship of the original negro” – to its Dominican counterpart, “a feeble, but brave and resolute people . . . struggling to preserve themselves from absolute extermination in a war of races, unrelentingly waged against them on account of their white blood.”¹⁵

Not surprisingly, among the most vocal of these publications was the *United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, where O’Sullivan had famously promoted “Manifest Destiny” and, as we saw in the previous chapter, Hawthorne had allegorized anxieties of racial “commixture” during the controversies over Texas and Mexico in the 1840s. Writing on Haiti and the Dominican Republic in the 1850s, a number of *Democratic Review* contributors argued that the racial and political identification of the Dominicans allied them “naturally” with the United States. Acknowledging the racial diversity of the Caribbean republic, the journal praised the Dominicans for allegedly undertaking a “simple process of intermixture and bleaching” that “should in time transform the mass of the Dominican people into an energetic white race,” “renovated by the admixture of blood, and the infusion of

some of the industry, thrift, and enterprise of foreign nations of the white race." The racial process endorsed here depended on "the immigration of a few thousand whites each year," apparently slaveholding emigrants who would also bring with them "their laboring population." The Dominican people would ideally undergo not precisely a "bleaching," that is, but a rigid bifurcation into the system of racial classification that characterized the United States: "two distinct social orders on the island, the white proprietary and the purely black population" rather than the more fluid racial order that had shaped the entire Caribbean since the colonial period.¹⁶

Journalists repeatedly predicted during these years that the problem of Haiti would, as the *American Whig Review* put it, "continue, until its final adjustment, to engage, in an intenser degree than ever, the attention of the American people"; essayists and editorialists standardly framed their own accounts with complaints to the effect that "the public journals . . . which have taken this business in especial charge . . . have failed to furnish sufficient and reliable data" on the subject.¹⁷ At the same time, the fluidity of Caribbean racial identities was precisely what many identified rhetorically as the underlying threat to the United States during this period. Writers consistently invoked the 1826 Congress of Panama and the US government's "refus[al] to admit the unconditional representation of the Haytian so-called republic" as a symbol of the nation's defense of whiteness and "the cause of republican liberty, then in its infancy" for all the Americas.¹⁸ When a number of business leaders began in the 1850s to urge their government to acknowledge Haiti in order to facilitate international commerce, a *Democratic Review* article summed up a common response in the title "Soulouquerie in Boston," warning that the "white Republican Government of the United States" must never "recognize the negro Empire of Hayti." Long before the late nineteenth-century constructions of the multicultural United States as an assimilating "melting pot," the writer found an alternative metaphor to express the anxieties of miscegenation that political intercourse with Haiti entailed: "It would prove a very nauseous plate of soup. Black broth with a vengeance."¹⁹

Yet such anxieties of racial amalgamation "occurring at our very door" coexisted with a strong imperialist sensibility that saw the annexation of Haiti as a natural inevitability.²⁰ Soon after Pierce's inauguration, the new administration in Washington announced that it would "not be controlled by any timid forebodings about the evil of expansion." The *Democratic Review* accordingly called upon Pierce to "repair the mistakes and derelictions of [his] predecessors" in shirking their responsibility to take military action against Soulouque and his plans "to exterminate the white

race.”²¹ The New York *Weekly Herald* editorialized that filibustering adventures would secure the whole island under ultimate US control, reducing Soulouque “to the condition for which he was fitted.” At the same time, the US agent stationed in Haiti personally warned the emperor that private military expeditions, such as those that Narciso López was then undertaking against Cuba, were being organized against Haiti in Norfolk, Virginia, and would have the support of the US government should Soulouque continue aggressions against the Dominicans.²² Soulouque thus posed a particular threat, as one journalist put it, because he was “evidently of the opinion that the island of St. Domingo, in its entire extent, is allotted by Providence – in other words, by manifest destiny – to the development of the black race.”²³ Soulouque’s putative vision of a national manifest destiny of Haitian rule over the Dominicans and indeed the entire island of “St. Domingo,” or Hispaniola, could not coexist with an Anglo-American imperialism that defined itself in diametric opposition to Haiti in a hemispheric mission to “colonize by assimilation”: “so we shall continue to do,” vowed the *Democratic Review*, “until the entire continent and the islands of the Atlantic are united in a glorious and immortal fellowship.”²⁴

At the same time, however, Haiti constituted a kind of rhetorical impasse in the US public sphere specifically because of its revolutionary past, which had long been identified with that of the United States in the writings of intellectuals from Emerson to John Greenleaf Whittier and Wendell Phillips. US proponents of Caribbean expansionism thus worked diligently to undermine the possibility of an indigenous Haitian national discourse that might successfully help to define not only Hispaniola’s future but its history as well. Translating in its entirety an 1851 proclamation issued by Soulouque to the Dominicans, for example, the *Whig Review* nevertheless devoted some ten pages to debunking its message, which essentially called on the Dominicans to recognize their shared past with Haitians embodied in “the kindred blood that circulates in our veins.” The commentary warns first against the “rhythmical smoothness and musical cadence” of the Haitian text, which “fall[s] on the ear like the seductive strains of some sweet melody that leaves a lingering echo behind it . . . carr[y]ing us back to other days, evoking the slumbering memories connected with the enchanting island.” Suggesting that Soulouque himself may have been “softened and humanized” by his own rhetoric, “just as the greatest storytellers are said sometimes to melt at the recital of their own inventions,” the writer muses that “the siren has seduced even us far away from our purpose.” After casting the Haitian text as dangerously enticing, the analysis contends that

its message is both patently insincere and directed less at the Dominicans than at the US readers who will eventually encounter it in translation. The writer concludes by calling into question the text's very authenticity as a Haitian-written document: "Nor do we believe that Soulouque, or any of his ministers, was the author . . . It was intended to tell particularly in the United States, and had, if we are not much mistaken, a resident-foreign origin." Undermining the very possibility of Haitian authorship, the polemic instead invokes the terrors long associated with the Haitian Revolution, especially throughout the slaveholding South, recalling "the Christophes, Toussaints, and Dessalines of that day, whose very names are suggestive of scarce aught else than treachery, brutality, and barbaric cruelty."²⁵ Written about, read about, debated in Congress, and always in the public eye as a symbol of racial difference and the hemispheric potential of political chaos, Haiti was thus a virtual obsession in the mid-nineteenth-century United States.

The remainder of this chapter treats a little-known nineteenth-century play that sought to intervene within this obsessive discourse on Haiti by framing its historical argument precisely within the transamerican arena postulated in the US public sphere. Written by the Haitian dramatist, poet, and intellectual Pierre Faubert (1806–68) and published fifteen years after its initial 1841 staging in Port-au-Prince, *Ogé, ou, Le préjugé de couleur* (1856) documented the 1790 outbreak of revolt in colonial Saint-Domingue leading up to the revolution and sought thereby to contribute a dramatic voice to the dominant discourses on the history of independent Haiti. The second nation to achieve independence in the Americas, Haiti was nevertheless refused diplomatic acknowledgment by any government in the world until 1825, and by any government in the American hemisphere until 1865. Born of what C. L. R. James called the only successful slave revolt in history, Haiti came to represent an encroaching threat to national and colonial interests throughout the New World, a frightening specter of revolution and retribution against both Anglo-American and European slaveholding economies. Yet the history of its revolution was in fact "unthinkable in its time," as Michel-Rolph Trouillot has argued. Slavery in the Americas had from its beginnings been predicated on a world view in which "enslaved Africans and their descendants could not envisage freedom – let alone formulate strategies for securing and gaining such freedom": simply put, "resistance and defiance did not exist, since to acknowledge them was to acknowledge the humanity of those enslaved." Both the revolution and the existence of Haiti presented a challenge, in Trouillot's words, to the "very

ontological and political assumptions of the most radical writers of the Enlightenment,” and thus to the entire discursive framework surrounding issues of race and slavery in the Americas.²⁶

Faubert's *Ogé* is devoted in part to cultivating a historical methodology that attends to precisely this challenge. As the notes to his play make clear, even in the nineteenth century Faubert was not at all unaware of the ideological and historiographical contradictions that the independent nation exposed in post-Enlightenment intellectual cultures outside of Haiti. The drama presents itself within an extraordinary documentary context comprised of quotations from legal judgments and the Code Noir, a scholarly annotation clearly intended by Faubert not only to shape contemporary reception of the play but also to alter the meanings assigned to its controversial performance under an earlier political regime. The author himself admits to having made “slight changes” to the original text that was performed – modifications, the notes to his text reveal, that include extended literary response to two works published in the United States between the time of the play's performance and its publication.²⁷ Incorporating passages from a polemical novel by a French travel writer, Faubert explores the United States as a New World arena of *métissage* while positioning his play within a hemispheric context both thematically and intertextually. At the same time, Faubert recasts the domestic racial drama of what he calls *L'Oncle Tom* in a dramatic text that constitutes what I suggest is perhaps the earliest literary response to Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel in the francophone Americas. The play's revisionist transamericanism thus provides a powerful lens through which to reconsider *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, along with a number of other nineteenth- and early twentieth-century US works, in what I argue are their repressed francophone-Caribbean contexts.

FAUBERT'S HISTORIOGRAPHY OF REVOLUTION

In 1856, as *mulâtre-noir* tensions divided the Haitian body politic along lines of color and class, Pierre Faubert, writing from exile in Paris, published his historical drama *Ogé, ou, Le préjugé de couleur* (*Ogé, or, Color Prejudice*). Appearing in print half a century after the Haitian declaration of national independence, the play recounts the 1790 uprising of the revolutionary Vincent Ogé and his army of *gens de couleur libres*, free persons of color – most of them also *mulâtres* – and their eventual capture, torture, and execution at the hands of a militia organized by French colonial planters.²⁸ Ogé's revolt was among the first unmistakable signs of the future revolution that would lead to a Haitian state; news of his death crystallized the colonial

question in France, where his insurrection became a popular subject for celebration on the late eighteenth-century stage.²⁹ Faubert's play was less concerned with the nature of revolution, however, than with the persistence of racial and color prejudice, and his depiction of Ogé's revolt is accordingly framed by a domestic tale of the relationship between a colonial slaveholder, the Vicomte de la Ferrière, and his virtuous daughter, Delphine, who falls in love with Alfred, a heroic young *homme de couleur libre* later executed by the Vicomte's associates after taking part in the insurrection. According to Faubert in the foreword, the play was originally written to inspire "*nobles sentiments*" (12) in the students under his directorship at the *lycée national*, the national school of Port-au-Prince, and was first performed before their families – whose members, Faubert reminds his readers, included in large part "veterans of the war of our independence" (18). Ogé provides not only a dramatic commemoration of a revolutionary figure, then, but a means of visualizing connections between the white supremacy structuring slavery and colonialism in Saint-Domingue in the previous century and the legacy of racism tearing Haiti politically and socially in the author's own moment. The play returns, in other words, to a prerevolutionary scene in colonial Saint-Domingue to intervene within a contemporary form of color prejudice, the *préjugé de couleur* underpinning the *mulâtre-noir* division that was both an immediate aftermath of colonialism and a continuing threat to Haitian unity in the mid-nineteenth century. The primary pedagogical impulse of the play was thus, according to Faubert, "to make [the students] see . . . all that is absurd and odious in color prejudice," and to insist that "the mulatto and the black are, whatever they do, entirely in solidarity concerning this prejudice, as it attacks them both equally" (12, 20).

Yet the initial performance of *Ogé* in 1841, lacking the explanatory introduction and scholarly notes included in its 1856 published version, drew sharp criticism from the eminent French abolitionist Victor Schoelcher, who two years later published a study of the francophone Caribbean entitled *Colonies étrangères et Haïti* (1843). In this study, Schoelcher cast Ogé himself in a highly critical light and characterized the play, in Faubert's own paraphrase, as "the execution of a government order . . . a work itself written under the influence of color prejudice."³⁰ Though Faubert vehemently denies both of these accusations in his introduction, Schoelcher's criticism brings into sharper focus the disparity between the political resonances of the play's performance and those of its subsequent publication. Ogé was first brought to the stage toward the end of the quarter-century presidential tenure (1818–42) of Jean-Pierre Boyer, whose administration Schoelcher clearly suspected of shaping the play's ideological content. Notorious for

using his office to solidify the *mulâtre-noir* division throughout Haiti, Boyer had systematically set out to deny literacy and education to the *noirs* who had previously had access to schools under the rule of Henri Christophe in the north.³¹ Undoubtedly, then, Boyer would have approved of Faubert's choice for the titular subject of his drama: Ogé had traditionally been an icon of *mulâtre* elitism, a revolutionary who agitated for equal rights on behalf of Saint-Domingue's *gens de couleur libres* though not for extending such rights to its almost entirely *noir* population of slaves.³²

Boyer's presidency had ended, however, long before the publication of Faubert's play. Facing not only *noir* opposition to his *mulâtre* supremacy but the political attacks of a group of young *mulâtre* reformers, Boyer was ousted from office in 1842 and deported to Paris, where he remained until his death. The following years witnessed rapid changes in Haiti's political climate, involving a series of *noir* uprisings against the *mulâtre* elite, and culminating in the presidency of Faustin Soulouque, who, according to the (hardly neutral) US commissioner stationed during 1849 in the eastern half of the island, "declares extermination of whites and mulattoes." By 1851, the US special agent in Haiti, Robert Walsh, would write to Secretary of State Daniel Webster bemoaning the Soulouque administration as "a despotism of the most ignorant, corrupt and vicious description," its press "shackled to such a degree as to prevent the least freedom of printing," and its people "afraid to give utterance . . . to aught that may be tortured into the slightest criticism of the action of the Government."³³ Faubert himself alludes to a supervention of "political events . . . in [his] country" in these years, during which he was "retained a fair amount of time in prison," and after which he was exiled to Paris (14). Though he had for many years hoped to publish his "little drama," despite what he dismisses as "its lack of literary value" – and to defend his text against the accusations of color prejudice made by Schoelcher by putting the public in a position to judge it (13–14) – it was not until his arrival in France, in the wake of such strikingly different political circumstances in Haiti, that *Ogé* finally appeared in print.

It is Faubert's stated purpose in the introduction to redeem the play and its politics by allowing the published text to speak for itself. Yet the documentary scholarship with which Faubert frames his text – an extensive annotation that embraces legal judgments, governmental *lettres*, the Code Noir, and abolitionist biographies, as well as ancient and contemporaneous literary texts, including a compilation of his own "*poésies fugitives*" – belies the self-described transparency of his project, lending the play a wide variety of overlapping historical resonances absent from its original performance as a celebration of Ogé's participation in the early phase of the

Haitian Revolution. As Trouillot has pointed out, a primary recourse of the *mulâtre* elite in securing their hegemony during these years was to generate an “epic discourse” that claimed the revolution as their own while also disavowing the very color prejudice that sustained their insularity – *mulâtre* heroes of the revolution provided “one of [their] rare historical alibis . . . an indispensable reference to their claims to power.”³⁴ Himself a member of this elite, Faubert sought in *Ogé* a historical methodology that would provide precisely such an alibi on the home front while challenging the world views of a white readership outside of Haiti. Faubert’s uses of history thus strategically shape the meanings of both his text and the cultural memory of its 1841 performance, working to remediate *Ogé*’s status as a mere agitator for *mulâtre* rights in an uprising that laid the groundwork for the future Haitian Revolution.

In the foreword to his play, Faubert interprets the exclusion of *noir* interests from *Ogé*’s political platform and his rebellion for *mulâtre* equality as a direct result of orders from the Société des Amis des Noirs, who “often had to moderate [Ogé’s] ardent sympathy for his slave brothers” lest he commit “premature and irregular acts” that would impede their ultimate cause (25–26). This estimation of *Ogé*’s “ardent sympathy” for slaves has much in common with Bissette’s (see Chapter Three), but contrasts so obviously with that of modern historians of the Haitian Revolution that a few scholars have pointed to Faubert’s play as a prime example of the nineteenth-century “mulatto legend” of Haitian history, a text that “sacrifices historical probity in the name of political passions, giving undue influence to a flawed and minor revolutionary figure.”³⁵ As Aimé Césaire noted in *Toussaint Louverture* (1960), his historical essay on the emergence of Haiti as an independent state, *Ogé* wrote to the colonial Assemblée du Nord attesting in no uncertain terms that his demands for equality under the law extended not to “the sort of negroes who live in slavery,” but only to those “American colonists, known in the past under the injurious term ‘mixed-blood.’”³⁶ (*Ogé*’s use of the term “American” here reflects his argument that Haiti’s *mulâtres* had a “natural right” to rule the state, as they were true products of the New World, descended exclusively from neither Europe nor Africa.)³⁷

Well aware of *Ogé*’s historical reputation even in the mid-nineteenth century as an advocate for the *mulâtre* elite, Faubert attests in his introduction that “in treating the subject of *Ogé*,” he has “followed not only the historians who appeared to [him] to have written on this tumultuous epoch with the most impartiality but also the traditions of [his] country and even domestic memories, as many of [his] ancestors were contemporaries

of Ogé.”³⁸ In this sense, while his text may indeed “sacrifice historical probity,” it does so by enlisting what Trouillot calls those “histories that no history book can tell,” existing not in the official discourses presented in the classroom, but in “the lessons we learn at home, in poetry and childhood games, in what is left of history when we close the history books with their verifiable facts.”³⁹ Arguing not for the stability of any one historical narrative but for the convergence of multiple strands of history, Faubert proceeds to supplement official accounts of Ogé’s revolt for *mulâtre* equality – from published works whose titles and authors he never mentions within the nearly obsessive annotations that accompany his text – with his own “domestic memories,” which counter those histories critical of Ogé and of the events leading up to the 1790 uprising simply by recontextualizing them.

Faubert thus cultivates what he calls a particular “*manière de voir*” or point of view throughout the drama, one that derives in part from “interviews that took place sometimes in [his] presence” in the home of the French priest and abolitionist Henri Grégoire (discussed in Chapter Three), from whom he claims to have learned in his youth the alleged secret of Ogé’s unswerving devotion to the slaves of Saint-Domingue (25). Faubert’s dramatic disclosure of this secret in the third act of the play, during a confrontation between Ogé and the colonial planters who have finally captured him, hinges on the Procureur Général’s revelation that it is the planters who have pretended, on the basis of “lying letters” written by Ogé and his compatriots, that “their revolt had aimed solely at the amelioration of the lot of freedmen” (102). Whatever Ogé and his fellow *gens de couleur libres* may have said to the contrary was only “to put the colonists off the scent,” the colonial official argues; Ogé’s true “design, known by all the world,” was nothing less than “the extermination of the colonists and freedom for the slaves” (102–3). Here, the *Procureur Général* quotes at length from what he contends are Ogé’s actual words, during a well-documented historical meeting with a group of colonial planters in Paris, describing the right of *all* men to liberty – “the manifesto of the insurrection,” the colonial official bitterly concludes (102). Only the absence of a source in the notes indicates the fictional status of Ogé’s speech, which is rendered in the same style as the play’s numerous other quotations from historical documents such as the Code Noir. Exploiting the imaginative similarities between history and fiction, the play presents Ogé’s reported words as if excerpted from an official document while tracing the official accounts of his proslavery stance to a pretense on the part of the planters themselves. Faubert supplements what

he casts as a colonial version of Ogé's history, in other words, with what he designates as a more authentically Haitian one.

As much historiographic as literary, the play presents what Lois Parkinson Zamora has called a "particularly American literary concern with the usable past," in this case a colonial past that Faubert brings to bear on a postcolonial Haiti, continuously torn by *mulâtre-noir* strife, from which he himself lives in exile.⁴⁰ Self-consciously metahistorical, Faubert's vision of the past posits a set of external realities and sources of Haitian history while also embracing the varied contexts of its narration. There are "honorable men . . . whose official language, and even more than once whose acts, have been a tribute paid to the situation or to the moment, in the very interest of ideas that they could not defend openly," Faubert writes in the introduction: "But those who read history attentively must recognize that in judging political men it is greatly important . . . not to lose sight of the [principle of] *odiosa restringenda* of ordinary justice" (29–30). Faubert's warning speaks not only to contemporaneous Haitian readers who might condemn Ogé but also to those international readers of Haitian history who were disavowing Haiti's independent nationhood throughout much of the nineteenth century. The contingent unfolding of political events, he argues, appears entirely different when examined within alternative historical and literary frames.

THE THEATRE OF SLAVERY

It is Faubert's use of the dramatic form in responding to two US-set nineteenth-century novels – the literary genre most implicated in the construction of nationalist history – that structurally registers the author's skepticism in regard to the claims of a single historical narrative of the nation's emergence. While *Ogé* includes a number of heroic characters with whose speeches its audience is asked to identify and sympathize, its dramatic form excludes the possibility of a dominant narrative voice that would condition a reader's reception of oppositional utterances. The closing lines of the play sustain not the words of the noble Ogé, Alfred, or Delphine but the virulent voice of Delphine's father, the colonial Vicomte, who tells his daughter that she is "dead" to him for loving the *mulâtre* Alfred and thus having "so badly insulted the pride of the blood that runs in [her] veins" (118). Abrupt and disruptive of the anticipated heroic closure, the end of the play demands that its contemporary audience resist the sentimentalist pieties that are also integral to this nineteenth-century text and instead grapple with the opposing voices of the play that continue in their own

moment to circulate the *préjugé de couleur*. Insisting that the past is subject to a number of conflicting interpretations, the play asks its audience, as Faubert himself puts it, to “read history attentively.”

For Faubert, this mode of reading took on strategically international parameters. Proposing in his foreword “to formulate carefully [his] opinion on color prejudice” (19), he offers a transamerican tableau that recontextualizes the *mulâtre-noir* divide within Haiti by implicating the racial politics of its neighbor to the north. Underscoring the play’s overt thesis that “the mulatto and the black are . . . entirely in solidarity” concerning color prejudice, he defends his central claim in a passage that offers a revealing commentary on the play’s larger transnationalist project:

Indeed, be genius and virtue themselves personified, under a black skin or a yellow one, and go to a country where the prejudice of color reigns, as, for example, it does in certain parts of the United States of North America: the last of the white immigrants, whom you perhaps have turned down for a lackey in Europe, and to whom you gave alms while refusing to take him into your service, will blush to find himself next to you in a theater: by the sole privilege of his color, he is, by right as in actual fact, above all men who do not belong, without an atom of African mixture, to the Caucasian race . . . [W]ere [a mulatto] of whiter skin than the whites themselves, if he is of suspect origin, he is a pariah like the blackest.

(En effet, soyez le génie et la vertu mêmes en personne, sous une peau noire ou jaune, et allez dans un pays où règne le préjugé de couleur, comme, par exemple, certaines parties des Etats-Unis de l’Amérique du Nord: le dernier des émigrants blancs, dont vous n’avez peut-être pas voulu pour laquais en Europe, et à qui vous avez fait l’aumône en refusant de le prendre à votre service, rougira de se trouver à côté de vous dans un théâtre: par le seul privilège de sa couleur, il est, de droit comme de fait, au-dessus de tout homme qui n’appartient pas, sans un atome de mélange africain, à la race caucasique . . . fût [un mulâtre] blanc de teint plus que les blancs eux-mêmes, s’il est d’origine suspecte, c’est un paria comme les plus noirs.) (20–22)

If this commentary explicitly demonstrates how the *préjugé de couleur* bridges the very *mulâtre-noir* division it has incited, it also hints at Faubert’s self-conscious positioning of *Ogé*’s articulation of racial ideology within a larger transamerican scene. The passage recalls several theater scenes from Gustave de Beaumont’s 1835 antislavery novel, *Marie, ou l’Esclavage aux États-Unis, tableau de mœurs Américaines*, the sociological novel he produced from material gathered while traveling with Alexis de Tocqueville, and a work with which Faubert was undoubtedly familiar. Beaumont’s scenes illustrate through the eyes of his French narrator the rigid but arbitrary separation of races in the Jacksonian-era United States as exemplified

in segregated theaters; in one scene, Beaumont's French traveler witnesses a violent white crowd insulting his racially mixed companion, whose elevated speech and bearing contrast sharply with the roughness of the bigots.⁴¹ Recalling these scenes in the metaliterary passage preceding his own play, Faubert at once transposes his readers north to the country "where the prejudice of color reigns," and describes through a rhetoric of class differentiation more explicit than Beaumont's a hypothetical white citizen of the United States whom he can strategically oppose to his original audience, members of the Haitian elite well accustomed to traveling and living abroad in Europe. Faubert then asks his readers to imagine themselves sitting next to this putative US citizen in a theater, attending a dramatic performance: readers are to conceive both themselves and the ensuing play, that is, as agents within what he seems to elaborate as a kind of politico-literary theater of the Americas, in which the lowly North American "last of the white immigrants," an upstart new arrival to the larger American scene, sits alongside Haitian readers who claim American identity through the descent of many generations. In Faubert's vision of this theater, the hypothetical transamerican audience participates not only as the seated spectators, but also as the interpreting readers and ideological performers competing around the periphery of his play.

In fact, Faubert's extended theatrical metaphor superimposes two historical frames for his ensuing drama: a late eighteenth-century US-Saint-Dominguean affiliation that had brought Ogé's fellow insurgent Jean-Baptiste Chavannes as well as numerous other *gens de couleur libres* to fight in the American Revolution, and that brought Ogé himself to purchase arms and ammunition in the United States before returning to Saint-Domingue to revolt; and a mid-nineteenth-century disavowal of independent Haiti precisely as a nation of "men who do not belong . . . to the Caucasian race" and thus a potential threat to its own racially based economy. It was, however, the latter inter-American relation – between the first nation to abolish slavery in the Americas and its slaveholding neighbor to the north – that Faubert brought to bear upon his own drama of Ogé's uprising. In the opening scene of the first act, the Marquis de Vermont, a leading plantation owner and member of the colonial Superior Council, invokes the United States in his response to news that the colony has been severely agitated by the incitements of its "accursed freedmen" (46). "Don't let us take seriously all the nonsense of the negrophiles," the Marquis addresses the worried head of the colonial Superior Council: "Let us strive instead to be strong enough to imitate the United States of America" (46). The play introduces through this early injunction a certain representational self-consciousness, an

awareness of its own project of dramatic mimesis, suggesting that Faubert's theatrical revisitation of slavery in colonial Saint-Domingue will in fact model itself after the "peculiar institution" of the United States. Announcing its own generic status as a form of imitation, the play privileges the original over the derivative, a dichotomy that was especially fraught with ideological implications in an increasingly postcolonial American hemisphere of the nineteenth century where, as Carolyn Porter has put it, "copy and model are by no means merely aesthetic terms, entailing as they do cultural struggles for national as well as authorial legitimacy."⁴² This becomes especially clear later in the introduction to the play, where Faubert somewhat anxiously notes the similarity between his own dramatic portrait of Ogé and the historical one that appears in Alphonse Lamartine's 1847 *Histoire des Girondins* and finds it "not unprofitable" to remind readers that the celebrated French writer's work was published after the initial performance of his play (31).

Yet if Faubert seeks to consolidate the original status of his text in the introduction, he also repeatedly problematizes the copy-model dichotomy so often deployed to denigrate postcolonial literary production. When the slaveholding Marquis cries, "Let us . . . imitate the United States of America," the larger play signals not an aesthetic lack in the copy but a moral bankruptcy in the model. At the same time, the opening scene gestures towards a play within a play: within the theatrical commemoration of Ogé and his role in Haitian national history, in other words, Faubert produces a transamerican drama – and one that implicitly undertakes the task, to use Porter's phrase, of "remapping American literary history." Most strikingly, Faubert announces his text to an international American literary scene by locating his play and its surrounding documents within a network of transamerican textual negotiations through engagement with two particular prior texts: *L'Oncle Tom*, the 1852 novel that, in Faubert's words, "moved the two worlds" (173, 37); and a work that Faubert opposes directly to Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, Marie Fontenay's *L'autre monde* (*The Other World*) (37). Both texts, set in the United States and centrally concerned with slavery and ideologies of race, serve Faubert as literary coordinates within the hemispherically American map upon which he plots his own text.

REVISION IN *L'AUTRE MONDE*: OGÉ AND *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN*

First published in Paris under the name Mme Manoel de Grandfort in 1855, *L'autre monde* fictionalized the North American travels of its author through

the adventures of a young French protagonist, Julien.⁴³ Though the novel covers a range of American sites and topics, it was Julien's sojourn in New Orleans and the subsequent change in his opinions about racial difference that first drew the attention of US readers. Indeed, this aspect of the novel received so much scrutiny in Louisiana newspapers as to warrant the nearly immediate publication of an English translation, its translator seeing fit even to contest the northeastern seat of literary capital in the United States by publishing it without delay from New Orleans: "[I]t is hoped," ran the publisher's notice accompanying the English version, that "our temerity in attempting to vie with the Northern hotbeds of translators and publishers will not be too severely punished." With a subsequent tongue-in-cheek reference to Grandfort's vitriolic attitudes toward the country of her travels, a memorandum at the end of the notice reminds readers again that the translated work is "one of the very few literary productions that can boast of having been written, printed, bound, and published in this exceedingly degenerate and good-for-nothing city of New Orleans."⁴⁴

The suggestion that New Orleans represents an American locus of particularly keen distaste for Grandfort proves entirely accurate. In a chapter entitled "New Orleans and Slavery," Grandfort remarks upon two American sites, both francophone borders of the anglophone United States, but drastically different in her eyes: she has been "painfully impressed," she writes, by the contrast she sees between Canada, where "the religion, manners, customs, habits and impulses of its people are altogether French," and Louisiana, "a land that yellow fever, rattle snakes, and the rogues of all nations overrun" (6–7). Particularly distressing amid such international amalgamation is the presence of what she calls a "terrible negro-French patois" (46), a linguistic blend marking the racial and cultural *métissage* that her protagonist Julien confronts all around him as he wanders through New Orleans. Soon after his arrival in the city, for example, Julien goes in search of a beautiful Creole lady, a woman born in the Americas though of entirely European descent, but she is nowhere to be found. He has just begun to suspect that she is "but a myth" when he hears "negro-French patois" all around him and encounters not his idealized Creole but a "young mulatress," "crouching" and "shrill," followed by a "negress," "frightful" to Julien not least because she is married to a white Frenchman (45–46). For Grandfort, linguistic amalgamation appears to threaten the racial purity even of the white Creole women; on the slave plantations, she notes, they "frequently use no other tongue than the negro patois," which distorts "their pretty faces [with] a stupid, ugly look" (67). Alongside her vehement opposition to what she terms "emancipation of a race created

for servitude" (70) is an overriding anxiety that slavery in this "Other World" has corroded the cultural and racial purity of her once-French countrymen. Thus, in the final lines of the chapter, Grandfort invokes the widespread nineteenth-century rhetoric of atavistic racial contamination to warn against "the man who counts a black among his ancestors": "were he of the seventh generation . . . and consequently had, according to the Doctors, but a single drop of negro blood in his veins, you must still beware of [him]. The slightest incident will bring to light the abject cowardice of the race" (71).

This last pronouncement appears in the original French in the notes to Faubert's text, along with six full pages of citations from the 1855 Paris edition of *L'autre monde* exemplifying "what color prejudice really is" (37). Of course, Faubert might have chosen from any number of examples of nineteenth-century racist thought to illustrate the prejudice that he argues should unite rather than divide Haitians. Yet suturing passages from *L'autre monde* around the text of his play, and making special reference to it in his introduction, positions his inscription of Haitian national history precisely within the theater of the Americas posited as the site of his drama. "The United States of North America" may be, as Faubert puts it, "a country where the prejudice of color reigns," a nation witnessing in the mid-nineteenth century the rise of a racial Anglo-Saxonism opposing a vision of US racial purity to a construction of the larger Americas as mixed and inferior.⁴⁵ Yet as Faubert reminds readers through his citation of Grandfort, the United States, and in this case particularly New Orleans, remains part and parcel of *l'autre monde*, and as such is both the terrifying site and the symbol of New World *métissage* in the imagination of the French writer from whom he quotes at such length.

At the same time, Faubert's interpolation of Grandfort into both the introduction and the notes to his play allows him to play *L'autre monde* off against its own self-stated novelistic nemesis, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. For if Grandfort's sociological preoccupation is with racial mixture, her literary obsession is clearly with what one of her Creole characters sardonically terms "the lamentations of the sensitive Mrs. Stowe," which are spreading what Grandfort argues are seriously misguided beliefs about the goodness of American slaves and the moral imperatives of abolition (51). Thus Julien arrives in the "Other World" believing *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to be "the most eloquent and most moral work of the age" (51) but is soon converted to understand through his experience with "a desperate band of runaway negroes" that those members of the race "in the possession of their liberty [are] subject only to ignoble and repulsive

instincts": "they are merely an error of nature!" he cries in his moment of epiphany (69).

Grandfort's polemic against Stowe clearly has implications reaching beyond the North American borders of the novel. It is not hard to imagine how Haiti might resonate in the imagination of a nineteenth-century proslavery French writer describing this "desperate band of runaway negroes" in the "Other World," nor why she finds *Uncle Tom's Cabin* – the book, as Julien puts it, "making its way more and more in the two hemispheres" – such a threatening symbol of international literary transmission. That Grandfort expects her own novel to counteract the transcontinental reverberations of Stowe's writing becomes clear in the final pages of the book, where she predicts a future "Revolution" in North America, a kind of recuperation of France's loss in Haiti transposed north to the United States, during which a "great French population" from Canada would enable the "recomposition" of "this deformed American body-corporate" "to the profit of civilization, morality, and the public peace" (144). In the meantime, Grandfort warns her French readers to beware of signs of US influence in Europe: in the midst of "our great public edifices," she cries in the book's final line, "a meagre, white cravatted Reverend [preaching] to us those doctrines which we cannot forget or forgive, because they gave birth to the sensitive 'Uncle Tom'" (144).

None of the international literary capital of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was lost on Faubert, who recruits Stowe's novel in the introduction to his play as both a textual contact zone between Europe and the Americas and a preemptive apology to any French reader who might impute to him antipathy toward whites:

I cannot, therefore, be animated by any hostile sentiment against the white race, even in reading diatribes like those of Mme Marie Fontenay (Manoël de Grandfort), from whom I have cited a number of fragments in the notes to this compilation. These sorts of books, moreover, are amply compensated by works such as *Uncle Tom*, this little volume that has moved the two worlds, though Mme Fontenay found no other merit in it than being *biblical*.

(Je ne puis donc être animé d'aucun sentiment hostile contre la race blanche, même en lisant des diatribes comme celles de Mme Marie Fontenay (Manoël de Grandfort), dont j'ai cité quelques fragments dans les notes de ce recueil. Ces sortes de livres, d'ailleurs, sont amplement compensés par des ouvrages tels que l'*Oncle Tom*, ce petit volume qui a ému les deux mondes, quoique Mme Fontenay ne lui ait trouvé d'autre mérite que d'être *biblique*.) (37)

Effectively implicating hatred of the "white race" within his titular subject while nobly resisting it, Faubert deploys his praise of Stowe's novel

as both the occasion for his use of Grandfort's text and a kind of "ample compensation" for his overt critique of a French writer.

But if Faubert pits Stowe's "little volume" against the "diatribes" produced by writers like Grandfort, he also adeptly engages with the narrative of *Uncle Tom* in a number of revealing ways throughout his own dramatic project. The numerous parallels between the two texts begin with the themes of sacrifice and redemption that link Tom's death with the deaths of the Haitian insurgents, opposing the former's passive acceptance of slavery and the latter's active vows to secure their rights or "die nobly" (61). As in Stowe's novel, moreover, the primary story of the titular figure, Ogé, incorporates the domestic tale of a slaveholding father's painful loss of his beloved Creole daughter, Delphine, a character repeatedly described as a noble and angelic spirit who, like Stowe's Eva, pleads on behalf of the enslaved and proscribed before her family (including a vain and mean-spirited aunt who recalls Eva's mother, Marie St. Clare). Like Eva, Delphine serves often as a mouthpiece for her creator's didacticism: she casts truth in Stowe-like rhetoric as "the expression of that which the wisdom of God has ruled" and denounces "a prejudice [of color] that, to [her] eyes, is the most unjust of all" (55). The similarities between the young Saint-Dominguean Creole woman and the little New Orleanian Creole child are truly striking, for Delphine seems to embody much of the young woman that Eva was destined to become, had she lived to grow up and, like Faubert's heroine, receive her education in Paris as befitting a young Creole lady of good family and fortune. Just as Stowe's beloved Tom gazes upon Eva's otherworldly beauty, "the deep spiritual gravity of her violet blue eyes," and "half believe[s] that she was one of the angels stepped out of his New Testament,"⁴⁶ Delphine finds a devoted admirer in Faubert's leading protagonist, Alfred, who calls her an "angel of heaven," her soul a "veritable ray of divinity," "inaccessible to the miserable passions of the earth" (56).

In Stowe's novel, Tom's affection for his "little lady" soon yields a "friendship [that has] grown with the child's growth," making it "hard to say," as Stowe puts it, precisely "what place she held in the soft, irrepressible heart of her faithful attendant" (224). Yet their relationship – "snared by the treacheries of an unspoken and deflected seduction," in Hortense Spillers's analysis⁴⁷ – is meticulously stripped of any overt romantic potential by Eva's young age, by her spiritual status, and ultimately by an untimely death that prevents her from reaching sexual maturity in a heterogeneous, slaveholding Creole society that might threaten the racial purity she embodies. In Faubert's play, on the other hand, the "faithful attendant" of Eva's counterpart is not a slave at all but a young *homme de couleur libre* who studied

with Delphine in Paris. The relationship between Alfred and his beloved Delphine, moreover, overtly celebrates the potential, if not the realization, of interracial marriage. Eva's literal death in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* becomes in Faubert's text Delphine's social death, a self-sacrifice she makes in the name of her love for Alfred: "you will regard me as dead to you and to society," she tells her father in the play's final scene, "in learning that I had promised to heaven to take no other husband in this world than [Alfred], the generous man who saved you" (117). "I desire to devote the rest of my life to God," Delphine announces, when she learns that, as the young leader in Ogé's band of insurgents, Alfred has been executed at the hands of the colonial Superior Council after maintaining throughout the play that to die for a noble cause is to be chosen as a favorite of the heavens.

In this sense, Alfred appears to be a revisionist literary counterpart not only of Uncle Tom but of Stowe's character George Harris, the noble mulatto hero who draws on similar rhetoric throughout the novel, declaring that he will seize his freedom himself or die trying. It is precisely through this self-realized character of a former slave that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* overtly questions the legitimacy of Haiti as an independent nation. "I want a people that shall have a tangible, separate existence of its own; and where am I to look for it?" George asks in a notorious passage near the end of the novel, only to answer: "Not in Hayti, for in Hayti they had nothing to start with . . . The race that formed the character of the Haytiens was a worn-out, effeminate one; and, of course, the subject race will be centuries in rising to anything" (374). It is this pronouncement about Haiti, and others of similar spirit scattered throughout Stowe's popular novel, to which Faubert's play most movingly responds.⁴⁸ Even as it references Stowe to counter the virulent *préjugé de couleur* rampant in Grandfort's *L'autre monde*, the play both recalls and resists George Harris's assertion about "the character of the Haytiens" through the voice of Alfred, who vows, with the other insurgents, "to prove to my oppressors that I do not belong to a race lacking energy" (56), and insists that "we must rehabilitate a whole race of men unjustly fallen in the esteem of the world" (82) – an international assessment of Haitian national identity that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* did much to reinforce in the years immediately preceding the publication of Faubert's *Ogé*.

FRANCO-AFRICANISM AND US LITERARY HISTORY

Through its remarkably internationalist grasp of such literary negotiations of race, Faubert's revisionist drama provides a critical perspective upon a set of racial anxieties prevailing in the contemporaneous United States

and emerging in response to the very transamerican theater in which the play locates itself. As we saw in Chapter Three, these concerns inspired a series of vigilant new restrictions passed in the early nineteenth century by slaveholding states censoring a dissenting francophone print culture in the United States and prohibiting the emigration of Haitians and other free people of color from the French Caribbean. As early as 1778, Virginia had enacted legislation to forbid “further immigration of negroes” in general; passing similar restrictions over the next twenty-five years, North and South Carolina directed their legislation more specifically toward the West Indies. And by 1806, the newly acquired Orleans Territory of Louisiana had identified the potential threat to its permeable Caribbean borders in even more pointed terms: “the introduction of free people of color from Hispaniola and other French islands.”⁴⁹ Of particular concern were Saint-Domingueans of mixed descent, many of whom fled the island for the United States – especially Louisiana, Maryland, and Pennsylvania – during and after the Haitian revolution.⁵⁰ Such anxieties did not go unnoticed by Boyer, Haiti’s president when *Ogé* was first performed, who brought them to the bargaining table in requesting political acknowledgment of Haitian statehood from the United States; in 1825, seeking an exchange for diplomatic recognition, he offered to prevent Haitian immigration to the southern United States by way of northern states that had not passed such restrictions.⁵¹ His proposal was denied – and partially on the grounds that recognition itself entailed receiving “mulatto consuls” and “black ambassadors” within the nation’s borders. As Missouri senator Thomas Hart Benton put it, “the peace of eleven states will not allow the fruits of a successful negro insurrection to be exhibited among them”; Georgia senator McPherson Berrien concurred, stressing “the magnitude of the danger with which we are menaced.”⁵²

The various forms of transamerican permeability worrying US political culture during this period have their aesthetic embodiment in what I want to postulate in conclusion as a kind of Franco-Africanist shadow falling across the national literary landscape of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁵³ Emerging despite and perhaps also because of southern restrictions on immigration from the francophone Americas, this literary manifestation registers the rigid opposition of foreign and domestic that Faubert both deploys and destabilizes with his transamerican theatre – and that the southern states, along with much contemporary Anglo-American writing, urgently sought to solidify. We might begin to think about this Franco-Africanist shadow through what Susan Gillman refers to more broadly as “the function of the Caribbean as displaced site and carrier of ‘the taint of blackness’ in the Anglo-American national imaginary.”⁵⁴ Yet the specifically

francophone manifestation of this "taint," though less explicit, is often more persistent than its anglophone and hispanophone Caribbean counterparts. It often marks a place of disturbance or ambivalence within its accompanying text: an indeterminacy surrounding the issue of racial identity rather than a hidden truth to be revealed at an opportune moment; a pervasive anxiety of origins rather than the titillating revelation of these origins.

We get a glimpse of this Franco-Africanist shadow in Stowe's description of Haitian "character," which hinges on the ambiguity of the two "races" to which she refers: the "worn-out, effeminate" one and the "subject" one, either of which may logically be French or African or Franco-African. The point for Stowe seems partly to be that Haiti in particular, and the francophone Americas more generally, make ambiguous the very racial distinctions that her novel seeks, but without quite succeeding, to clarify. As the narrative moves from the Anglo-dominant world of Kentucky to the exotic, French-inflected New Orleans doorway to the West Indies, racial distinctions become less and less determinate. A central figure from this New Orleans scene, for example, is the blond, blue-eyed father of little Eva, Augustine St. Clare, "son of a wealthy planter of Louisiana" and "a Huguenot French lady" (132), who reveals during an emotional recollection of his family history that he has a brother, a twin of the same name as Faubert's mulatto hero Alfred: and though "they say . . . that twins ought to resemble each other," Augustine confides, "we were in all points a contrast" (195). This heretofore unmentioned brother, possessed of "black fiery eyes, coal-black hair . . . and a rich brown complexion" (195), appears just as Augustine describes his mother's otherworldly purity and his father's old determination on the slave plantation "to rule over men and women, and force existence out of them" (195); the brown sibling, Augustine sums up mysteriously, "was begotten in his [father's] image" (196).

Through this charged revelation of kinship between Augustine and a dark brother, the narrative introduces a racial ambivalence it cannot resolve despite their biologically twinned origin from the same French mother. It comes as little surprise, then, when Alfred's son Henrique appears as a virtual twin to his novelistic namesake, Harry, the mixed-race child of Eliza and George Harris: Henrique is "a beautiful sight . . . with his bold brow and dark, glossy curls, and glowing cheek . . . laughing gayly" (236), while Harry, with "a certain comic air of assurance," has "something in his appearance remarkably beautiful and engaging . . . black hair, fine as floss silk . . . in glossy curls . . . a pair of large dark eyes, full of fire," quite like Alfred's (3). Though Harry appears during the first pages of the narrative in Anglo-dominant Kentucky, the novel's conclusion places him securely

in the francophone world of Louisiana, revealing him as none other than the grandson of the tragic quadroon Cassy, New Orleans-born, French-speaking, possessed of magical powers associated with Vodoun, and unwilling mistress to a man who “learned his trade well, among the pirates in the West Indies” (326). Connected in yet another way to Henrique, Harry is also the nephew of Cassy’s mixed-race son Henry, a marginal figure in a novelistic world teeming with both Anglo and French derivations of the same name, who is sold away in New Orleans as a child only to reappear miraculously in the final pages of the text.

This Franco-Africanist shadow cast by New Orleans and its proximity to Haiti and the larger West Indies produces, then, a profusion of ambiguous, cross-racially twinned instantiations that undermine the novel’s overt project of racial essentialism. In an odd but telling conversation between Augustine and Alfred, the dark twin contends that the history of the “abominable, contemptible Hayti” would have been entirely different had the “Haytians” been Anglo-Saxon: “The Anglo-Saxon is the dominant race of the world and *is to be so*” (234). Augustine concurs, but remarks ominously that “there is a pretty fair infusion of Anglo-Saxon among our slaves, now”: “If ever the San Domingo hour comes, Anglo-Saxon blood will lead the day. Sons of white fathers . . . will rise, and raise with them their mother’s race” (234). Though the novel anxiously insists here and elsewhere on the superiority of “Anglo-Saxon blood,” the conversation between these two Louisiana characters born to a French mother only highlights the impossibility of an impermeable, Anglo-Saxon United States discrete from the interrelated New World histories of “Hayti” and the larger francophone Americas. Indeed, Stowe’s version of Franco-Africanism registers what we might call the palimpsest of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* – a partially erased story of racial ambiguities upon which Stowe’s novel writes itself, a tale that the novel continuously references but refuses fully to tell. This occluded story renders even the omniscient narrative voice unstable in its pronouncements of racial identity toward the end of the novel. Thus the character Mme de Thoux, introduced by the narrator as a French woman traveling between the United States and Canada, turns out in fact to be George Harris’s mulatta sister, formerly the slave and then the wife of a West Indian Creole master.

This particular marker of transamerican racial ambivalence takes an equally compelling form in Herman Melville’s *Pierre*, published in the same year as *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Here, the eponymous hero is haunted by the Franco-Africanist figure of Isabel, a ghostly stranger claiming kin, her face revealing the “expression of . . . his youthful father . . . intermarryingly

blended with some before unknown, foreign feminineness.”⁵⁵ The daughter of Pierre’s father and an exotic French emigrant purported to have fled the Reign of Terror, this illegitimate sibling nevertheless has a “dark, olive cheek” and “Nubian” eyes that threaten to “desecrate the whitest altar” of the Glendinning family name – suggesting that her Frenchness, much like Mme de Thoux’s, may have come by way of the multiracial Americas rather than directly from eighteenth-century France (46, 145, 91). Isabel thus marks the presence of what Eduardo González calls “*mulatez*” in Melville’s novel, reminding us that “[i]n literary fictions, racial mixture and incest go hand in hand.”⁵⁶ Pierre’s father himself seems to have entertained questions about racial crossings during his affair with the French woman, for he had been consulting a book on “the strangest and shadowiest rules” of physiognomy (160), one of the “sciences,” along with phrenology, Egyptology, and craniology, embraced by pre-Darwinian ethnologists who sought to demonstrate genetically based racial hierarchies. Not surprisingly, Pierre’s mother casts the relationship between her son and the half-sister born to the mysterious French woman as a form of amalgamation, that most widespread of antebellum metaphors for racial mixture, which causes her to feel her own blood “chemically changing . . . as though [she] had borne the last of a swiftly to be extinguished race.”⁵⁷

Though Melville never finally reveals the mystery of her origins, Isabel retains her function as a suggestive figure for transamerican racial crossings even beyond the immediate scope of the novel. Three years after the publication of *Pierre*, the Franco-Africanist figure embodied in Isabel returns, figured this time as the slaveship in “Benito Cereno,” the “San Dominick,” associated through its name and its bloody revolt with colonial Saint-Domingue. While Isabel’s “ebon” hair is likened in *Pierre* to the “Saya of Limeean girl at dim mass in St. Dominic’s cathedral” (149), in Melville’s ensuing narrative of slave revolt, the strange ship entering the harbor of St. Maria appears “not unlike a Lima intriguing,” seductively veiled by a “dusk *saya-y-manta*.”⁵⁸ Isabel’s warning to Pierre – “if indeed my soul hath cast on thee the same black shadow that my hair now flings on thee . . . Isabel will not outlive the night” (190) – reappears in “Benito Cereno” in the famous dialogue between Amasa Delano and the diminished captain of the slave ship. “You are saved,” Delano contends, “What has cast such a shadow upon you?” (116). The captain’s choked, two-word reply – “The negro” – gives a name not only to the unspoken anxieties surrounding Isabel in Melville’s earlier novel but also to the larger threat evoked in his narrative of the *San Dominick*: that transamerican contact between the United States and the former Saint-Domingue would prove as

inevitable, and as opaque, as the Yankee Delano's bloody encounter with the overthrown slave ship.

And even the briefest consideration of a few exemplary texts from later in the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth furnishes provocative evidence that Franco-Africanism continued to inspire US literary production, suggesting the pervasive cultural contention, as Cooper's Natty Bumppo had put it earlier in the century, that English, as opposed to French "jargon," "is the genuine tongue of a white-skin."⁵⁹ Lydia Maria Child, credited with inaugurating the tradition of miscegenation literature in the United States, introduced in her early story "The Quadroons" two mixed-race mistress characters whose French-inflected names, Rosalie and Angelique, suggest one prototype for the exoticized, female figure embodying this maxim. Returning to this figure in her post-Civil War novel *A Romance of the Republic* (1867), Child created two polyglot heroines whose playful song from the French West Indies invokes the erotic, interracial (ambiguously incestuous) charge of francophonie in the early pages of the story: "Un petit blanc, que j'aime,/En ces lieux est venu . . . Petit blanc, mon bon frère!/Ha! Ha! Petit blanc si doux!/Il n'y a rien sur la terre/De si joli que vous" – "the love-song of a young negress," explains a knowing character, "addressed to a white lover" (7, 13).⁶⁰ Similarly, George Washington Cable explored the Creole French dialects of Louisiana in fiction and essays, and, as Gavin Jones has argued, drew on the ambiguities of linguistic hybridity to subvert prevailing late nineteenth-century ideologies of racial purity.⁶¹ For Kate Chopin as well, the francophone world of both antebellum and late nineteenth-century Louisiana hinged upon racial indeterminacy: in "Désirée's Baby" (1893), the volatile, slaveowning planter Armand Aubigny casts off his wife when she bears a dark-skinned child, only to suspect that in fact his own mother belonged "to the race that is cursed with the brand of slavery"⁶²; in *The Awakening* (1899), amid a French Creole culture of complex ethnic stratifications, the vessel for Edna Pontellier's initial arousal to her once dormant desires is Robert Le Brun, whose name suggests a racially ambivalent counterpart to that of the light-skinned slave La Blanche in "Désirée's Baby."

In a very different region, Sarah Orne Jewett's "The Foreigner" (1900) presents a francophone interloper amid the tale's Maine shipping community: the mysterious "French born" wife that Captain Tolland, engaged in the mid-nineteenth-century sugar trade, meets "out in the Island o' Jamaica," where she has sought the aid of the Maine sailors, claiming to have no living family or other connections.⁶³ Her racial identity is never explicitly specified, though Mrs. Todd, the internal narrator of the tale,

soon qualifies that “she come here from the French islands” rather than France (542). “[W]ell acquainted with the virtues of plants,” the foreigner engages in secretive activities and knows how to “work charms” that hint at Vodoun (541); upon her deathbed, she is visited by the apparition of her mother’s “dark face,” an event witnessed at firsthand by Mrs. Todd (553). The foreigner thus becomes the subject of the first and only ghost story that Mrs. Todd has ever told, occasioned in the text years later by a terrible storm that reminds her of West Indian tidal waves. The natural wonders and dangers of life in a small Maine coastal shipping town, where West Indian trading voyages are frequent, are projected onto the murky genealogies of the French Caribbean, embodied in the ghostly, maternal figure who appears at the end to reclaim the foreigner, the indispensable figure against whom the community has understood and defined itself.

Perhaps most self-conscious of the Franco-Africanist trope as both necessity and invention is William Faulkner, who introduces in *Absalom, Absalom!* the mixed-race daughter of a Haitian planter as the maternal ancestor of a long-secreted, African-descended US genealogy that culminates, in the novel’s closing lines, in “conquer[ing] the western hemisphere.”⁶⁴ Borne into the United States through Thomas Sutpen’s participation in the quelling of a Haitian slave revolt and “bleach[ed] out” through further generations of racial mixing, the genealogy nevertheless retains an African essence while embracing all who encounter it: as the Canadian-born Shreve tells the white and southern-bred Quentin, “and so in a few thousand years, I who regard you will have sprung from the loins of African kings” (302). But if the novel proposes this genealogy as an encroaching threat on an Anglo-American obsession with racial purity – “one nigger Sutpen left” that Quentin admits he “still hear[s] . . . at night sometimes” (302) – the text suggests simultaneously that the Franco-Africanist figure is also the necessary construction of its Anglo-American characters: from Sutpen, who seeks his fortune in the West Indies and finds his first wife in “a shadow that almost emerged for a moment and then faded again” (199); to Quentin’s grandfather, who sees the wife “just emerging for a second of [Sutpen’s] telling, in a single word almost” (201); to Quentin and Shreve, who generate the rest of her identity between themselves; to Rosa, who acknowledges on finding a picture of the repudiated wife’s child with Sutpen, Charles Bon, “even before I saw the photograph I could have recognized, nay, described the very face. But I never saw it . . . so who will dispute me when I say, Why did I not invent, create it?” (118).

But if Anglo-American writers of the period enlisted Franco-Africanism to embody anxieties of purity and origin, certain African American authors

developed their own sustained critique of this racist trope. The first novel of the African American literary tradition, William Wells Brown's 1853 *Clotel*, makes use of all the melodramatic and gothic trappings of Franco-Africanism in a late chapter titled "The Mystery," appropriately set in a graveyard at twilight in Dunkirk, France. Here the protagonist George Green sees a veiled lady dressed in black who screams and faints repeatedly at first sight of him. When he meets the widow again, she is introduced into the narrative simultaneously as Mrs. Devenant and – in a transitional "becoming" implied by the French name – as Mary, a former slave from the United States and George's long-lost beloved. In a turn of plot recalling Stowe's series of doubled, cross-racial identities, Mary recounts being rescued from her fate as a slave by the Frenchman Devenant because of her strange similarity to his sibling: "I had an only sister," he explains, "who died three years ago in France, and you are so much like her that had I not known of her death, I would most certainly have taken you for her . . . The love which I had for my sister is transferred to you."⁶⁵

Yet Brown's *Clotel* appears to deploy Franco-Africanism's uncanny twinings, mutations of identity, and obscure revelations of hidden kinship as a provision of novelistic closure alternative to Stowe's advocacy of colonization in Africa. France rather than Liberia becomes the site of freedom from racial oppression in *Clotel*, and the novel's Franco-Africanist ambiguity a source of cautious optimism rather than an anxious figuration of an encroaching francophone Caribbean. Though Brown never refers explicitly to Haiti in the pages of his novel, he summons its specter by citing without acknowledgment from John R. Beard's 1853 history of the Haitian Revolution in a key chapter on Clotel's arrest as a fugitive slave. This silent observation of the revolution foreshadowed Brown's own biographical and political ties to Haiti throughout the course of both his career and his multiple rewritings of Clotel's story. After issuing his 1855 history, *St. Domingo: Its Revolutions and Its Patriots*, in which he fashioned Toussaint Louverture as an American revolutionary superior to his US counterpart in George Washington (evoking – perhaps intentionally – Emerson's discussion of Toussaint and Washington in his 1844 essay "Character," discussed in Chapter One), the author lectured and published in support of African American emigration to Haiti and considered repatriating there himself. Later, turning his hopes again upon the United States and the Civil War, Brown published an 1864 version of the earlier novel in which Clotelle (as Clotel has become) reunites with her white father in France, only to send him home, from her francophone haven, back to Virginia, to emancipate his slaves.⁶⁶

Modeling her narrative closely upon Brown's versions of *Clotel*, the late nineteenth-century poet and novelist Frances Harper recruits a Franco-Africanist heroine for her first novel, only to reveal and liberate her, in the phrase of her subtitle to *Iola Leroy*, through "Shadows Uplifted." Her protagonist Iola grows up believing herself to be a white French Creole child, though in reality her mother was, like Cassy's and Armand Aubigny's, her father's slave before marriage. Unlike the ambiguous Franco-Africanist figures invented by authors from Stowe to Faulkner, however, Harper's Iola, without capitulating to an ideology of racial essence, embraces "the traditions of her blood" upon the revelation of her ancestry and refuses to marry or move further in the novel "under a veil of concealment."⁶⁷ By the early twentieth century, on the other hand, a number of writers were creating francophone or French-identified protagonists who chose to live under precisely such a veil. Two novels about racial passing that appeared during the Harlem Renaissance, Walter White's *Flight* and Jessie Fauset's *Plum Bun*, foreground the cultural capital of French while undermining the dominant racial rhetorics of an Anglo-Saxonist culture. White's Creole heroine Mimi Daquin, descended from a "San Domingan" immigrant, had thought in her francophone world of New Orleans that "all people were hers – that only individuals mattered"; in anglophone Atlanta, she quickly learns that racial identity involves "sharp, unchanging lines which seemed to matter with extraordinary power."⁶⁸ Trading on her Creole inheritance, she decides to pass across the color line: "My name is French, I speak French . . . and they'll never think me anything else but French" (208). Fauset's Angela Murray, on the other hand, is not born into a francophone culture, but early in life "some secret subconscious ambition" drives her to learn "the beautiful, logical tongue" of French.⁶⁹ Choosing to pass and becoming Angèle Mory, she effectively translates herself outside of the dominant racial ideology, locating racial definition in the textuality of her new and former names rather than in the "fake biology" propounded by the "national race purity" movement and its drive for "100 per cent Americanism" – an (Anglo) "Americanism" that was for both of these Harlem Renaissance writers an implicit threat to what they represented as the racial inclusivity of French Creole culture as well as other American cultures outside the United States.⁷⁰

From Stowe and Melville to White and Fauset, and from radically different points of view, US writers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries repeatedly invent a Franco-Africanist figure to crystallize the ambiguities confounding an Anglo-Saxonist national ideology seeking paradoxically to solidify the imaginary racial borders of the nation even as its proponents debated the future of expansionism in the Americas. This, too, is

something that Pierre Faubert well understood in his own mid-nineteenth-century writing of Haiti. Among the “*poésies fugitives*” included in the text of *Ogé* is a clear companion poem to his drama. Entitled “Aux Haïtiens” (“To the Haitians”), it asks *mulâtres* and *noirs* alike to put aside the *préjugé de couleur* tearing Haiti and consider the looming threat of imperialism from the north:

Quoi! Divisés, lorsque, tout près de votre plage,
 Mulâtres et noirs sont proscrits!
 Quand cette République, appui de l’esclavage,
 Rêve, avide, à vos champs fleuris!⁷¹

(What! Divided, when, so near your shore,
 Mulattos and blacks are proscribed!
 When this Republic, supported upon slavery,
 Dreams, greedily, of your flowered fields!)

The republic “supported upon slavery” is of course the United States, and thus the poem appended to *Ogé* moves readers back full circle to the transamerican theater with which Faubert introduces his play and its complex relation to the US literary culture represented by Stowe.⁷² That nineteenth-century writers in the Americas were deeply aware of their burdens in modeling their national literary projects both upon and against a European literary scene is undeniable. But as Faubert’s own writing of Haiti suggests, this is surely only part of the story.

Epilogue
*“Our whole Caribbean elsewhere”: Julia Alvarez
and transamerican renaissance at the millennium*

In 1856, the same year in which Faubert warned his Haitian readership against the republic to the north, the future national poet of the Dominican Republic, Salomé Ureña, was six years old and remembering the song she used to sing with her sister, Ramona:

I was born Spanish,
By the afternoon I was French,
At night I was African.
What will become of me?¹

This childhood memory opens the first-person narrative strand of Julia Alvarez's *In the Name of Salomé* (2000), a novel that interweaves Ureña's literary and familial biography with a third-person account of her daughter's life as she carries Ureña's poetry and letters from the United States to Cuba, before returning to the Dominican Republic to die. The song lyrics recalled by the six-year-old Salomé introduce the novel's central concern with poetry and memory, and, in particular, with the living texts that Salomé's future daughter, Camila Henríquez Ureña, will draw upon for sustenance in the physical absence of her mother, who dies when Camila is only three. But the lyrics also encapsulate the historically shifting national and racial identities of the Dominican Republic, formally separated in 1844 from Haiti, with which it shares the island of Hispaniola.

First settled by the Spanish as Santo Domingo, the eastern portion of Hispaniola had an early history quite different from that of its western counterpart in the French colony of Saint-Domingue, destined to become, as Haiti, the second independent nation in the American hemisphere. Santo Domingo was invaded by Toussaint Louverture in 1798 during the Haitian Revolution, officially ceded to France by Spain in 1801, restored to Spanish dominion again in 1809, and then occupied a second time by Haiti between 1822 and its emergence as the Dominican Republic in 1844. Slavery in Santo Domingo was abolished twice during the years under Haitian governance,

first under Toussaint, after which it was reinstated by the Spanish, and then permanently after the 1822 occupation.² The Dominican Republic was thus, as Salomé's childhood song suggests, "born Spanish," turned "French" in the "afternoon" of Spain's loss of the colony to France, and finally underwent the twenty-two-year "night" of Haitian rule – an occupation that would shape the country's early sense of national identity as "*blancos de la tierra*," the whites of the land, in a paradoxical racial opposition to the "African" nation occupying the western third of the island. "We are not racially pure whites," wrote the Dominican president Buenaventura Báez during the 1850s, "but we will never tolerate being ruled by blacks."³

Yet the history of racial enmity between the Dominican Republic and Haiti is inseparable from the history of a US presence in the Caribbean, as another detail from Salomé's childhood narration makes clear: her family's house has "a zinc roof from the United States of America, which was a country much closer by than Spain . . . a more convenient roof to have in 1856 when I was six years old and bombs were going off up and down the streets of the capital" (14). After 1844, despite flourishing trade relations, the United States refused recognition to the newly declared Dominican Republic, which was too proximate to and historically bound up with Haiti for the comfort of US slaveholding contingents. Nevertheless, a number of early Dominican leaders perceived the United States – nearer than Spain, as the child Salomé understands – as a potentially "more convenient roof," that is, as a source of protection against foreign threats for the new and vulnerable republic. Such exigencies came to bear heavily upon the ethnic self-definition of the early Dominican nation as well as its *antihaitianismo*, its antipathy for the African difference that it projected onto the western portion of the island. When the Dominican president Pedro Santana first sought recognition from the United States in 1844, his special envoy would thus carefully (mis)inform US Secretary of State John C. Calhoun that half of the Dominican population was fully white, and that two-thirds of the remaining half was mulatto, with only a small black minority to be found in the Republic.⁴

As Alvarez's novel pointedly recognizes, however, the trajectory of nineteenth-century US relations with the Dominican Republic has occupied a much less prominent place within US literary history than the more popular narrative of Anglo-American lust for Mexico and Cuba and antipathy for Haiti – in which, as we have seen, notable writers from Melville and Hawthorne to Prescott, Stephens, Bryant, and Stowe figured significantly. Yet by 1845, Polk's administration had registered the rich natural resources of the Dominican Republic as well as the potential for a strategic naval base

in Samaná Bay. In 1856, when Salomé's narration begins, the Pierce administration had recently attempted to negotiate a treaty that would ostensibly offer US recognition to the republic in exchange for the bay, from which the project of acquiring Cuba could be conveniently launched. Though Pierce's plan was defeated in the US Congress, the Buchanan administration followed suit in seeking Samaná in 1859; Johnson brought a proposal before Congress to annex both the Dominican Republic and Haiti in 1860; and, under Grant, the United States and the Dominican Republic actually signed a preliminary agreement on annexation in 1869. At the turn of the century, the United States would take financial control of the debt-driven Dominican economy, and by 1916, a full-scale US occupation that would last for nine years was underway. When Wilson ordered the establishment of a military government in the Dominican Republic that same year, the elected Dominican president was Francisco Henríquez y Carvajal – the widowed husband of Salomé Ureña, and the father of Camila.⁵ “The effects went on for a long time,” Alvarez's Camila explains to one of her US students in 1960, though she “does not add that it was the American occupation that drove [her father] out,” that “nine years [were] spent trying to reclaim his country”: “A president without a country. Someone (not her!) should write a book about it” (41).

In this sense, Alvarez makes clear that the political details of Henríquez's ouster during the US occupation, though untold in the novel, have nevertheless given formative shape to Camila's life in exile and her quest to inherit her mother's legacy as the foremost poet of *la patria*. As a novel about the Dominican past, about Dominican poetry and exile, *In the Name of Salomé* thus insists upon the dialectical and constitutive relation between the cultural and political histories of the United States and the wider Americas as well as the often antagonistic public spheres in which these histories played themselves out. Set alternately in the United States, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and, briefly, Haiti, the novel's interweaving narrative perspectives juxtapose the events of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Dominican and Cuban politics with contemporaneous US historical episodes, documenting their convergence in the pages of periodicals, newspapers, and public conversations and arguing for the conceptual inseparability of these national pasts. When the child Salomé thinks of March 1861, the year in which Spain briefly retook the Dominican Republic after seventeen years of political autonomy, she understands the event automatically from a perspective of historical irony provided by a frame of American events that exceeds the national history of her homeland: “I think of Cuba and Puerto Rico about to fight for their independence, and of the United States just

beginning to fight for the independence of its black people, and then I think of my own *patria* willingly giving up its independence to become a colony again" (25). Salomé's perspective displaces the Civil War from its long-standing place as a definitive landmark on the US national map to but a single event within an international American historical arena, even as it lays the groundwork for further layers of historical irony as her childhood understanding of the US war "for the independence of its black people" gives way to new transamerican convergences.

In 1865, the teenaged Salomé, from a family of relative privilege as well as mixed-race descent on the side of her mother, laments the assassination of Lincoln as "the president of our neighbor to the north [who] had struggled for the freedom of people of our color" (48). But by 1869, when her pseudonymous protest poem "Recuerdos a un proscrito" appears in the pages of the Dominican newspaper *El Nacional*, it is accompanied by news that "President Grant to our north was sending a commission of American senators to study the idea of buying off part of the island and shipping some of their own Negro people to live there. A group calling itself the Ku Klux Klan was burning crosses in front of these Negro people's houses, so maybe they wouldn't mind coming" (61). The Civil War of the United States becomes intelligible in part here through its African colonization schemes in Hispaniola; more generally, Caribbean history impinges on the national US narrative embracing phenomena from the rise of robber-baron capitalism (a news item citing Vanderbilt's famous injunction that "Everybody but me and mine be damned" ends up in the latrine, "where it belonged" [184]) to the 1889 Pan American Congress convened in Washington, DC (the adult Ureña notes in a letter to her husband, the future president Henríquez, that President Harrison "has been quoted as saying that the United States wants to be a friendly neighbor. Friendly indeed – they come and help themselves to what they need! . . . Meanwhile they are devouring their own continent. Did you hear that they have acquired four new states, each one larger than our little patria?" [226–67]) to President Harding's 1923 vacation in Alaska ("Why not encourage him to go to the Caribbean?" Camila wonders. "He practically owns all of it now . . . Cuba, Haiti, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic," not to mention "what the Yanquis have done in Mexico, Panama, Nicaragua" [197, 200]).

At the same time, part of Alvarez's project throughout *In the Name of Salomé* is to emphasize the inextricability of this hemispheric historical legacy from a network of authorial and readerly relations among multiple American literary traditions spanning the course of a century. Indeed, it is one of the novel's central aims to envision transamerican renaissance

as a continually vivifying force for the writing of literature, a historical and archival knowledge that is also a diachronic politics of pedagogy: the teaching of literature by traveling and often exiled writers and critics continually migrating across the boundaries of nation, language, and institution foregrounds what had been the crucial role of pedagogical work in the formation of various public spheres in the nineteenth-century Americas. In the process, Alvarez traces an intimate familial and literary genealogy that intersects more than once with the various transamerican literary relations I have sought to define in the preceding pages.

The contemporary implications of this genealogy come into focus when we consider the novel's generic relation to its own hemispheric literary milieu. To modify Linda Hutcheon's phrase for a dominant subgenre of the postmodern novel, *In the Name of Salomé* might be understood as an example of *literary*-historiographic metafiction, a work about the writing of literary history that is self-reflexively aware of literary historiography's political dimensions as well as its narrativity. Like historiographic metafiction more generally, Alvarez's novel moves in and out of its characters' perspectives, shifting from third to first person, from omniscience to intimate limitation, throughout a nonlinear and heavily intertextual narrative. Its narrative progression is organized around the original Spanish titles of Ureña's poems and Alvarez's English translations of them, which are arranged in reverse order and then paired with the Spanish, so that the first chapter, "Uno: El ave y el nido," finds its corresponding English translation in the novel's final chapter, "Eight: Bird and Nest," while its penultimate chapter, "Ocho: Luz," is translated in the second part of the first, "One: Light." These oscillating Spanish and English chapter headings correspond in turn to the first- and third-person narrations of Ureña and Camila, respectively, which themselves unfold in reverse order, so that Camila's story moves backward from 1960, while Ureña's moves forward from 1856, until the two narrative strands converge in the final two chapters, occurring at the close of the nineteenth century: Camila is born in 1894, in Ureña's narration of "Luz," and Ureña dies in 1897, leaving Camila motherless at three, in the sorrowful "Bird and Nest." The epilogue, "Arriving Santo Domingo: September, 1973," jumps forward nearly a century and offers the novel's first and only first-person narration by Camila, who has now found both her mother's legacy and her own voice in the Cuban Revolution. Requiring a certain nonchronological interpretive work on the part of the reader, this formal relay between "original" and translative modes suggests both the self-referential inadequacy of monolingual narrative (Alvarez's novel of Dominican poetry and history is in fact written entirely in English) and,

paradoxically, of direct translation itself, which too easily domesticates and renders transparent its ostensible object.

Alvarez's organization of the narrative's progression also constructs a hemispheric literary public sphere that continually expands and contracts, beginning with Camila's narrow existence as a Spanish teacher in Poughkeepsie, NY, as it opens onto a future of Caribbean activism and teaching in Cuba, and turning intermittently to the detailed landscape of reading and writing in Ureña's early life in Santo Domingo, DR. This in turn gives way to the novel's intricate weave of public writings documenting Dominican relations with Haiti, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and finally the United States. Encompassing both the local and the transamerican, this narrative geography plays as well on the contingencies and ironies of the meaning of place as, for example, in its choice of North Dakota as the birthland of Marion, Camila's friend and sometime lover – one of the four newly acquired states, that Ureña sardonically remarks upon in the letter written from Santo Domingo to her husband. In both form and content, then, *In the Name of Salomé* gestures toward the limits of the national narrative, not only historical but literary; indeed, Alvarez's novel is partly *about* the impossibility of recounting its particular literary history within such traditional chronological, linguistic, and geographic boundaries. Like many of the central texts studied in the preceding pages, the novel provides a kind of object lesson in the often occlusive nature of nationalism vis-à-vis literary-historical understanding.

In fact, most of *In the Name of Salomé*'s central and many of its marginal characters are themselves historical literary critics, including Camila Henríquez-Ureña, who has been a literature professor at Vassar for eighteen years when the novel's third-person narrative strand begins; the nineteenth-century essayist José Castellanos, who compiled the first anthology of Dominican poetry and included verses by Salomé Ureña as well as her father, the poet and jurist Nicolás Ureña, both of whom published political poetry under pseudonyms in *La República* and *El Nacional*; and Ureña's son Pedro Henríquez-Ureña, the author of numerous volumes of literary criticism and a major literary figure in Mexico before he became the Norton lecturer in literature at Harvard in 1940. The novel's concern with literary interpretation emerges from the opening pages, as Camila prepares in 1960 to leave behind her secure life as a professor in the United States and travel to Cuba to join the revolution begun a year earlier: it is a choice that she has made after "consulting" her mother's poems, after repeated textual cross-referencing and juxtaposing, after glossings and reglossings that finally guide her decision. Camila has spent her life in the company of her

mother's verses, but she arrives in 1960 at an exegesis of Ureña's oeuvre that changes the course of her life; intimately linked to the most deeply personal and political of choices, literary interpretation thus impels her to the place "where Castro and his bearded boys are saying alarming, wonderful things about the new patria they are creating" (2).

From the prologue on Camila's departure, then, *In the Name of Salomé* not only contemplates but itself engages in a kind of literary-historical interpretive work. A trunk containing Ureña's papers arrives at Camila's door, sent by her brother Max from Santo Domingo. As Camila sorts through original copies of her mother's poems and letters, the novel reveals that invention is integral to the writing of literary history, and traces out competing narratives of Ureña the poet as authored first by her husband, later by her son, Pedro, and finally by Camila herself. As Alvarez recounts the emergence of the first, official story, Pancho (as Ureña's husband is known to the family) developed early on a particular vision of his wife as the national poet and a future symbol of the country: patriotic, disembodied, and unambiguously white. Pancho edits her poems, rewrites her words, and discourages the erotically charged verse that she describes as the work of "a woman as well as a poet" – "a voice that came from deep inside me . . . my own voice expressing my secret desires" – dismissing it as "singing in a minor key" when she should instead be attending to her "future as the bard of our nation" (177). Pancho himself further shapes this future after Ureña's death when he commissions her portrait as the national bard – a portrait, Camila stresses, that is her "father's invention," an emblem of "the legend *he* was creating" in the years leading up to his presidency: a white poet, all trace of her identity as what Camila calls "mulatto . . . a mixture" carefully erased (44).

Years later, Ureña's son Pedro Henríquez-Ureña perpetuates the legend begun by his father, editing a new edition of Ureña's poetry in which Camila notes many of her favorite verses missing: "Personal poems, Pedro calls them, as if that diminishes their value" (243–44). Staging a familial parable of the ways in which modernism and masculinism conspire to devalue a specifically feminine poetic tradition, Alvarez's novel imagines Pedro's shame and anxiety when Camila is called upon to read something in front of a group of literary notables from Spain gathered in a Boston bar: "He does not want her to recite one of their mother's poems. Modernism is upon them . . . and the disapproval or even inattention of these eminences would hurt" (116). The scene poignantly evokes and lends context to Pedro Henríquez-Ureña's magisterial history of Latin American letters, *Literary Currents in Hispanic America*, published in 1945 but originally delivered as

the Norton Lectures in 1940. Alvarez responds in particular here to Pedro's chapter on the "Pure Literature" of *modernismo*, with its strange relegation of the memory of Ureña as the national Dominican poet to two scant footnotes, only one of which mentions her work: "her patriotic poems," but not her "personal" ones.⁶

Alvarez, by contrast, resurrects Salomé – edited, disembodied, and whitened for posterity by her husband and family, critically dismissed by her son and generations of literary scholars writing after modernism – and envisions her at the center of an alternative, reshaped tradition through the story surrounding Camila and told by Salomé herself. In opposition to her well-known father and brother, Camila invents an account of her mother's poetic life that provides her with a more usable legacy than that offered in official versions of Salomé's literary career. Camila's account allows her not simply to edit but to improvise upon her mother's verses, drawing on them to understand her own early life of exile in Cuba, her travel from Cuba to become a student and then a literature professor in the United States, her decision to return to Castro's revolution in Cuba, and finally her return to Santo Domingo to die. As a child, Camila risks punishment by altering Ureña's last poem – "Mi Pedro" – inscribed to the son who would later dismiss her work: "With a pencil, line by line, she had changed all the pronouns and masculine endings – her first poetic endeavor! – so the poem was addressed to her, not Pedro" (120). Though this childish poetic act appears minor, Camila undertakes it in order to render the poem faithful to her memory of her dying mother, who is writing quickly, "a desperation in her voice, as if she had very little time to get something important said," and has already titled the poem when her three-year-old daughter enters the room and Ureña decides that the verse is "now being addressed to Camila" (119).

As imagined by Alvarez, Camila's memory and her early alteration of the poem effectively constitute a new literary-familial genealogy for Ureña's descendants, one that includes not only her sons Pedro and Maximilian Henríquez-Ureña, both extensively published as men of letters, but also her now-forgotten daughter. Indeed, in Alvarez's literary-historiographic account of this genealogy, Camila is in fact a poet in her own right, though just beginning to compile her first collection of verses. Among her poems, one called "La raíz" evokes simultaneously her motherless condition and her protopoetic need – "a root probing in the dark earth for water, dreaming of flowers" – and has received praise from the Spanish poet Juan Ramón Jiménez (116). But Pedro "seal[s] her doom" as a poet, dismissing the effort on the grounds of defending all of "our America" against, among other

crises, "the well-meaning but lacking in talent" (125). Predictably, then, Camila, too, is historically reduced to a mere footnote in Pedro Henríquez-Ureña's *Literary Currents*, which mentions not her poetry but her hagiographic study of Eugenio María Hostos. An eminent nineteenth-century philosopher and pedagogical theorist originally from Puerto Rico, Hostos occupies a fittingly central place in Henríquez-Ureña's literary history of Latin America: one of the "typical men of letters . . . those whom we may call fighters and builders . . . men for whom literature was often a part of their public service."⁷ Celebrated for his promulgation throughout Latin America of social ethics and rationalist positivism, Hostos also developed an early distrust of literature as the potential enemy of reason and virtue – a distrust that *Literary Currents* effectively breezes over by observing that the philosopher "fortunately . . . discovered a moral lesson in Shakespeare and wrote a superb essay on *Hamlet*," and that, more generally, throughout his entire oeuvre "the gift of eloquence is shown on every page."⁸ In Alvarez's version of this literary history, by contrast, Hostos wants nothing less than to "banish . . . poets from his rational republic," believing that "[w]e southern peoples have an overabundance of poetry" (112, 178). Pancho, swept up in Hostos's vision, introduces his wife to the philosopher hoping that "*el maestro*" will bring the light of positivism to clarify further her poetic mission as "a peaceful evolutionary battle to replace the dark cloud of unreason and violence and religion" (134). But Salomé Ureña refuses the lesson, in Alvarez's revisionist genealogy, and it is instead she who teaches *el maestro* that "poetry is also a necessary part of our being": a later scene finds Hostos reading her book of verses intently and marking various pages with jacaranda blossoms – the flowers that Camila's "*raíz*" will dream of in a poem from the next century (178, 186).

Hostos is but one among many nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Dominican, Cuban, Puerto-Rican, and Mexican writers that *In the Name of Salomé* documents in detail over the course of the novel's intricate unfolding of transamerican literary and political relations. Though the novel opens in the mid-twentieth-century setting of Vassar in Poughkeepsie, NY, it revisits a number of earlier literary moments across the Americas, beginning with the mid-nineteenth-century scene of Ureña's literary upbringing, in which political transmission occurred largely through poetry under a system of Spanish colonial censorship that "let anything in rhymed lines pass" – "every patriot turned into a poet" – and manuscripts were read aloud, copied, traded, and smuggled in and out of the country among secret coteries of writers and lecturers (55). Among the literary figures who shape the novel's course of events in large and small ways are the Dominican poets

Josefa Perdomo, who was the premier poet before Ureña, and who wrote verses, in young Salomé's view, that "were binding us to a country that had turned us into a colony" (56); Alejandro and Miguel Román, exiled to Haiti by President Baez for the political content of their work (60); José Joaquín Pérez, also exiled, and a proponent of "the new trend of indigenous literature," in which Ureña's long poem "Anacoana" would participate; César Nicolás Penson, who published in and helped to support the *Revista Científica, Literaria, y de Conocimientos Útiles* in the 1880s; Ramón Emeterio Betances, the Puerto Rican literary advocate of independence; Gaston Deligne, the Dominican modernist poet; Andrés Quintana, the poet of Mexican independence; Alfonso Reyes, Mexican *modernista* and friend and literary advisor to Pedro Henríquez-Ureña; José Enrique Rodó, Uruguayan author of *Ariel* (1900), a founding text of *modernismo* that warned against *Nordomania*, or naïve acceptance and imitation of the world power to the north; and José Martí, whose presence and words are woven intermittently throughout the novel. For most of these writers, the possibility and the reality of expatriation are the primary conditions of literary work: as Ureña notes, her young sons in Santo Domingo read "a little newspaper for children, *La edad de oro*, published by Martí exiled in Nueva York. Betances in Brooklyn, Hostos in Chile, Penson on his way north. Our whole Caribbean elsewhere" (226).

As the example of Martí's *La Edad de Oro* suggests, the novel's literary-historiographic critique is intimately linked to a concern with the role of pedagogy as a vital component of a transamerican public sphere. A novel about not only journalists, writers, and literary critics but teachers – from Hostos, *el maestro*, who travels throughout Latin America propounding his educational theory, to Ureña, who opens the first educational institute for women in the Dominican Republic under Hostos's guidance, to Camila, who teaches literature first at Vassar and then in Cuba – *In the Name of Salomé* insists throughout upon documenting its own implication, and the implication of literary history more broadly, within a complex of pedagogical projects and institutions that help both to produce and to resist various forms of national identity. In this sense, the novel comprehends the various national histories and literary traditions of the transamerican past and present not simply as academic subjects but as part of a larger teaching practice surrounding American literature writ large, one that insists on a comparative engagement that encompasses more than the geography of Camila's northeastern college. It is thus somehow fitting that Camila is in fact teaching a geography class on the afternoon of the death of her father, Francisco Henríquez y Caraval, whose bitterness over losing his

presidency during the US occupation of the Dominican Republic has never subsided.

The pedagogical politics theorized by Alvarez's novel is articulated most explicitly through the point of view of Camila, who locates her concept of revolution and her desire for the creation of a *patria* or homeland in the altering of official curricula, often through the inclusion of her mother's poems. In the literacy brigade in Cuba, Camila is assigned to read to women sorting coffee beans in a *cafetal* from a "suggested list" limited to the ideologically appropriate "*Granma*, Karl Marx, José Martí" (347). When she puts the list aside, deviating from the official pedagogical agenda of communism and Cuban nationalism, and reads instead an unpublished poem from the previous century by her Dominican mother, she finds her working students transfixed by the sudden change in curriculum. One of them recognizes immediately that the poem was "written by a mother," identifying with its words across national and temporal boundaries. Then, instead of resuming with the suggested reading list, Camila tells them her mother's story, after which "one by one, the women began to clack with their wooden scoopers on the side of their tables, until the din in the room drowned out the compañera, shouting for order, in the name of Fidel, in the name of the revolution" (348). "The real revolution," Camila concludes, "could only be won by the imagination": "When one of my newly literate students picked up a book and read with hungry pleasure, I knew we were one step closer to the patria we all wanted . . . Teaching literature everywhere, in the campos, classrooms, barracks, factorías – literature for all . . . *Liberature* . . . My mother's instituto had grown to the size of a whole country!" (347, 349).

Yet the novel also casts a certain skepticism on Camila's simple equation of literature with "Liberature," reading with revolution. Nearly blind, Camila has almost entirely lost her ability to read by the end of her time in Cuba. Meanwhile, her friend and former lover Marion, living in Florida, is able to keep "both her eyes sharp, repaired by an exiled Cuban doctor with the latest techniques." "Come and visit," Marion is still able to write: "I will pay for you to see" (339). This small but cruel irony of Cuban-US political history signals the limits of the literary-pedagogical work in which Camila has put so much faith when considered alongside the harsh economic realities of closed borders and international embargoes. At the same time, Camila's failing vision in the absence of medical resources that have been transported to the north evokes again, in Salomé's phrase, "our whole Caribbean elsewhere," a diaspora that not only includes the United States – home to both Camila and Pedro for many years – but also gives shape to its literary history. Indeed, the most crucial of the novel's frames for its

thematic concern with pedagogy are the initial scenes of teaching that occur in Camila's Vassar classroom – a self-reflexive corollary, perhaps, to the novel's New York site of publication and to Alvarez's frequent appearance on the contemporary US literature syllabus.

The opening of the novel dwells on Camila's identification with the poetry of Emily Dickinson, "whose fierce talent reminds her of her own mother's." "Emily Dickinson is to the United States of America as Salomé Ureña is to the Dominican Republic," the narrator contends, though qualifying that the analogy is not perfect: but "something like that" – enough of a comparison, that is, for Camila to at least begin a conversation with her students about two intertwined national and literary histories (3). Yet as Camila delves into the riches of Ureña's collection of poems and letters, she must also grapple with the indifference of students who are predictably unfamiliar with the national poet of the Dominican Republic, and who object to her inclusion in their curriculum with the old standby question, "Is this poet supposed to be any good? I never heard of her" (39). That the verses meet with disfavor is unsurprising: the reactions of Camila's students are hardly different from those of the few professional US literary historians to address the Caribbean during the decade in which the novel is set. One 1965 study, published five years after Camila's narrative begins, finds that "Dominican culture has always been thin, but a few civilized individuals have generally been able to keep the small educated group abreast of currents abroad." The only two such individuals mentioned by name in this study are none other than Pedro and Max Henríquez Ureña – not their mother, Salomé – and they are praised specifically for having "introduced Modernism."⁹ The link between this literary movement and the rejection of Ureña's work on the part of Camila's students is unmistakable; they object to the sentimentality of her mother's poems – "They're too bewailing, oh woe is me and my poor suffering country" (39).

In one of the novel's many literary-geographic ironies, one of the students who recoils most viscerally from Camila's attempt to discuss a Dominican cultural tradition one day in class ("lifting one corner of her mouth as if the old-world practice had a bad smell") is "a plump, freckled girl from Cooperstown," the ancestral home founded by James Fenimore Cooper's father, and to which Cooper would return to live as a gentleman farmer before embarking on his literary career (5). Camila finds that Ureña's poetry is difficult to introduce in a literary atmosphere pervaded by the unspoken presence of the eternally popular Leatherstocking author and his quintessentially filmable classic, *The Last of the Mohicans*: as she notes early on in her US sojourn, "Americans don't interest themselves in the heroes

and heroines of minor countries until someone makes a movie about them" (7). It is significant, then, that the historical moment of the novel's opening – 1960 – coincides with the mid-century apogee of those classic literary studies of nineteenth-century US literature most devoted to the myth of American exceptionalism – beginning, of course, with *American Renaissance* itself. Yet a mere five years after the 1940 publication of Matthiessen's study, Pedro Henríquez-Ureña's *Literary Currents* offers a kind of counter-vision to this myth through its own expansive, transamerican comparative history, drawing connections across an era of narrow nationalisms not only among the literatures of "Hispanic America," but among these traditions and US writers ranging from Emerson and Channing to Oliver Wendell Holmes.

At the same time, if Matthiessen envisioned a US literary heritage that reflected the democratic ideals of an embattled nation, both Henríquez-Ureña's critical study and Alvarez's literary-historiographic novel attend to the ways in which US imperialism gives sharp definition to a particular transamerican literary landscape. Thus, in documenting the pedagogical and novelistic career of Salomé's friend Hostos – known in part for his vision of a Caribbean confederacy embracing Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic, independent from Spain and united against other imperial threats – Henríquez-Ureña finds it worth noting that the Spanish-American War of 1898 did not actually liberate Puerto Rico from Spain, for "there was only a change of masters." The year after the war, Hostos traveled to Washington, DC, to entreat President McKinley for Puerto Rico's national autonomy and freedom from US governance; flatly denied, "*El Maestro*" "never recovered from the blow of this disaster."¹⁰ As Camila puts it after facing her students' disdain for Ureña's poetry, "Everything of ours – from lives to literature – has always been so disposable." But even when Camila knows she will be leaving the college to join the Cuban Revolution, she does not give up the project of revising the exclusionary US literary and historical narratives that the students have long been absorbing. In answer to their question, "Is this supposed to be any good?" she counters with a comparison: "As good as your Emily Dickinson, as good as your Walt Whitman" (39).

In the sum of its interweaving narratives, the novel insists that the American literary history that included Cooper, Whitman, and Dickinson also embraced writers such as Dickinson's Dominican "counterpart" in Salomé Ureña, and thus also the story of Ureña's inseparable struggles for political independence in the very years when US politicians contemplated buying a part of Hispaniola as "a place for their Negroes." These strands are

intricately connected, the novel suggests, and they offer a more accurate and complete account of the American literary past when their strange overlaps and coincidences are considered as branches within a shared transamerican genealogy rather than as roots of discrete national traditions. In later years, just after Ureña's husband has lost his Dominican presidency owing to the US occupation of the island, the novel finds Camila exiled in Washington, DC, reading Willa Cather's *A Lost Lady*, "a title she takes personally" (206). The allusion suggests a literary-historiographic vision that exceeds the predictable allegory of US imperialism versus Latin American resistance, though of course this is an inevitable part of the history that surrounds the texts the novel brings into dialogue. Yet the novel also embraces paradoxical and uncanny literary affiliations that refuse to be assimilated into this narrative, as when Camila and her *yanqui* lover Marion read *The Song of the Lark* together in bed, finding in Cather both a register of ever expanding US western perimeters and an artist able to inscribe their desire for each other. The simultaneous complexity and usability of the literary pasts traced throughout *In the Name of Salomé* might instruct us in precisely what Camila's US students fail to comprehend: the revisionary nature of a transamerican renaissance that can be sustained and contested within a single family's genealogy yet resonate in the public sphere with all the historical force of the wars, revolts, rebellions, exiles, and liberations that shaped it over the course of centuries.

Notes

PROLOGUE

1. Ronald Reagan, "Proclamation 5073 – Bicentennial Year of the Birth of Simón Bolívar," filed with the Office of the Federal Register, July 20, 1983.
2. Bolívar did not wish to include the United States in the Congress for fear of alienating Great Britain and of appearing to sanction the northern republic's potentially overbearing interventionism in the affairs of the new and emerging states. See John J. Johnson, *Simón Bolívar and Spanish American Independence, 1783–1830* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1968), p. 73. Bolívar had other reasons for excluding Haiti, which he also sought to ban from the more limited Federation of the Andes; as he wrote, "Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Peru, Chile, and Bolivia might form a glorious Federation . . . Such a Federation would have the advantage of being homogeneous, solid, and closed. The North Americans and the Haitians would be a foreign substance in our body"; cited in Gerhard Masur, *Simón Bolívar* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969), p. 412.
3. The discussion of the Congress here is based on the following sources: Lars Schoultz, *Beneath the United States: A History of US Policy Toward Latin America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 1–13; John H. Johnson, *A Hemisphere Apart: The Foundations of United States Policy Toward Latin America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), pp. 57, 86, 147–53; Daniel Florencio O'Leary, *El Congreso Internacional de Panamá en 1826: Desgobierno y anarquía en la Gran Colombia* (Madrid: Editorial-America, 1920); Arthur P. Whitaker, *The Western Hemisphere Idea: Its Rise and Decline* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1954), pp. 1–56; Indalecio Liévano Aguirre, *Bolivarismo y Monroismo* (Bogota: Editorial Revista Colombiana Ltda.); and Ann van Wynen Thomas and A. J. Thomas, Jr., *The Organization of American States* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1963).
4. See, for example, Nicolás García Samudio, *Independencia de Hispanoamérica* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1945), pp. 171–83; cited in Whitaker, *Western Hemisphere Idea*, p. 27.
5. See T. Ray Shurbutt, *United States-Latin American Relations, 1800–1850: The Formative Generation* (Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 1991), p. v.

6. See, respectively, "Travels in Columbia," *North American Review* (hereafter *NAR*, cited by volume and issue numbers) 21.48 (July 1825), p. 153; "Florida," *NAR* 13.32 (July 1821), pp. 62–100; "Mexico," *NAR* 14.35 (April 1822), pp. 420–55; "Humboldt's Works," *NAR* 16.38 (January 1823), pp. 1–30; "Mr. Poinsett's Notes on Mexico," *NAR* 20.46 (January 1825), pp. 77–79; "Haiti," *NAR* 12.30 (January 1821), pp. 112–35; and "Cubi's Spanish Grammar," *NAR* 20.47 (April 1825), p. 450.
7. Jared Sparks, writing in the *NAR* 19.44 (July 1824), p. 164; the discussion occurs in a long essay entitled "South America," pp. 158–209.
8. Sparks, "South America," p. 196.
9. Sparks, "South America," p. 171.
10. "Hobomok, a Tale of Early Times," *NAR* 19.44 (July 1824), pp. 262–63.
11. *NAR* 12.31 (April 1821), pp. 432, 433, 437.
12. Whitaker, *Western Hemisphere Idea*, p. 45. Clay's pan-Americanism was, however, short lived.
13. Hayne, Robert Y., Senator (South Carolina), "On the Panama Mission," *Congressional Record*, II, pt. I (March 1826), pp. 165–66.
14. *Ibid.*
15. See the treatment of this novel in Chapter Two below.

1 INTRODUCTION: TRANSAMERICAN RENAISSANCE

1. Walter Channing, "Essay on American Language and Literature," *North American Review* 1 (September, 1815), p. 307.
2. Channing, "American Language and Literature," p. 312.
3. Channing, "American Language and Literature," pp. 312–14.
4. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Poet," in *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (hereafter *Collected Works*) (Cambridge and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1983), 12 vols., vol. 3, pp. 19, 22.
5. Emerson, "Emancipation in the British West Indies," *Collected Works*, vol. 11, pp. 134–35.
6. See Albert J. von Frank, *An Emerson Chronology* (New York: G. K. Hall and Co., 1994), pp. 186–91.
7. Emerson, "Emancipation in the British West Indies," pp. 143–44.
8. Emerson, entry for September 10, 1840, in *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969), vol. 7, p. 393; "Emancipation in the British West Indies," p. 144.
9. See, for example, "Emancipation in the British West Indies," p. 147.
10. Emerson, "Character," *Collected Works*, vol. 3, p. 56.
11. Emerson, "Fate," *Collected Works*, vol. 6, p. 32.
12. Emerson, "The Fugitive Slave Law: Lecture at New York," *Collected Works*, vol. 11, pp. 231, 207.
13. Emerson, "Self-Reliance," *Collected Works*, vol. 2.

14. Emerson, "The American Scholar," *Collected Works*, vol. 1, p. 58. For a fascinating explication of Emerson's complex negotiation of US imperialism and expansionism, see Jenine Abboushi Dallal, "American Imperialism UnManifest: Emerson's 'Inquest' and Cultural Regeneration," *American Literature* 73 (2001), pp. 47–83.
15. Emerson, "Past and Present," *Collected Works*, vol. 12, p. 390.
16. Emerson, "Speech on Affairs in Kansas," *Collected Works*, vol. 11, p. 259.
17. See Emerson, *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (hereafter *Letters*) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), vol. 1, pp. 308, 342.
18. Emerson, *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 315; also p. 357, where Charles Emerson quotes Waldo's desire to travel to the West Indies.
19. Emerson, letter to Edward Emerson, in *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 321.
20. Letter from Charles Emerson to Waldo, in Emerson, *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 339.
21. Emerson, letter to Edward Emerson and Charles Emerson, in *Letters*, vol. 1, p. 338.
22. *Ibid.*
23. Emerson, "Nature," *Collected Works*, vol. 1, p. 10. On Emerson, visuality, and the "transparent eye-ball" passage, see especially the compelling discussion in Karen Jacobs, *The Eye's Mind: Literary Modernism and Visual Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 163–68, 188.
24. Emerson, "The Poet," p. 22.
25. As Doris Sommer has shown, moreover, Cooper sired a series of Latin American heirs who revised the novel in their own writings, either reinscribing Cora's death as a purifying necessity or defending her as the novel's truly American protagonist; see Sommer, *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), esp. p. 130.
26. See Chapter Two of this book.
27. On Cooper's hispanism, see Stanley T. Williams, *The Spanish Background of American Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 2 vols., vol. 1, p. 390. Though its focus is largely on early US literary interest in Spain, Williams's now-neglected study provides an invaluable starting point for the investigation of early US-Latin American literary relations.
28. On the question of Spain and its relation to the United States and the Spanish-American territories in this period through the mid-nineteenth century, see Nancy Vogeley's recent article, "How Chivalry Formed the Myth of California," *Modern Language Quarterly* 62 (2001), pp. 165–87. Vogeley notes both the overlooked importance of nineteenth-century US hispanists in "shaping a literary canon" and the significant ways in which Spain was often elided with her former and ongoing colonies in US writings of this period in order to advance US political and economic agendas. "If California could be imaginatively joined not to Mexico but to Spain, a European power with which the United States enjoyed peaceful diplomatic relations and a growing cultural affinity," Vogeley writes, "the land, long free from Spain, seemed ownerless and US interests there could be more easily pursued" (pp. 184–85).

29. See the chapter on Irving in Williams, *Spanish Background*, vol. 2, pp. 3–45. Cooper to some extent followed in Irving's footsteps, borrowing from the earlier history without acknowledgment, to produce his 1840 tale of Columbus's voyage, *Mercedes of Castile*.
30. See Kirsten Silva Gruesz, "El Gran Poeta Longfellow and a Psalm of Exile," *American Literary History* 10 (1998), pp. 395–427.
31. See also Williams's chapter on Lowell as a major interpreter of Spanish and Spanish-American culture in *Spanish Background*, vol. 2, pp. 180–207.
32. On francophone African American literature, see Michel Fabre's recent essay, "The New Orleans Press and French-Language Literature by Creoles of Color," in Werner Sollors, ed., *Multilingual America: Transnationalism, Ethnicity, and the Languages of American Literature* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1998), pp. 29–49.
33. Whitman's fascinating revision of the novel for a second publication in the *Brooklyn Eagle* omitted an interracial marriage from the narrative by transforming its temptress figure from the beautiful "Creole" slave of a French immigrant and plantation owner to the dark, "Creole" half-sister of the same Frenchman. See the annotations to Walt Whitman, *Franklin Evans*, in Thomas L. Brasher, ed., *The Early Poems and the Fiction* (New York: New York University Press, 1963), pp. 124–239.
34. See Arthur Hobson Quinn, *Edgar Allen Poe: A Critical Biography*, revised edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), pp. 249 and 263.
35. Sandra Gunning furnishes an interesting perspective on Nancy Prince's narrative in its hemispheric arena in "Nancy Prince and the Politics of Mobility, Home and Diasporic (Mis)Identification," *American Quarterly* 53 (2001), pp. 32–69.
36. On Hawthorne and Mexico, see Chapter Four of this book.
37. See John Carlos Rowe's incisive reading of this novel in *Literary Culture and US Imperialism: From the Revolution to World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 97–119, as well as the second chapter of Timothy B. Powell, *Ruthless Democracy: A Multicultural Interpretation of the American Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 52–73. Native American writings of the United States, as well as the histories and perspectives of indigenous Americans more generally, are playing an increasingly important role in the development of comparative American methodologies, though as Dana Nelson points out in a review of Daniel K. Richter's *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), this work raises obvious complications insofar as it remains largely limited to "the kinds of materials Western-trained academics view as fundamental to their evidentiary work"; see Dana Nelson, "From Manitoba to Patagonia," *American Literary History* 15 (2003), p. 377. As Rowe points out, Native American writings of the United States provide a "national discourse that enunciates the concerns of transnationality and postcolonial study" and calls for further complicating of "the transnational implications of the Native American uses of nationalist ideology"; see John Carlos Rowe,

- “Nineteenth-Century United States Literary Culture and Transnationality,” *PMLA* 118 (2003), p. 82. Rowe’s observations are made in the context of a discussion of Cheryl Walker’s *Indian Nation: Native American Literature and Nineteenth-Century Nationalisms* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).
38. On Melville’s “Lima intriguing,” see Chapter Six of this book.
 39. Rowe, “Nineteenth-Century United States Literary Culture and Transnationality,” pp. 80–81. See also the discussion of Thoreau and Emerson in Paul Giles’s “Transnationalism and Classic American Literature” in the same issue, pp. 62–75.
 40. Whitman, “Democratic Vistas,” pp. 940, 938. Latin American responses to Whitman have been the focus of recent essays by Doris Sommer, “José Martí, Author of Walt Whitman,” in Jeffrey Belnap and Raúl Fernández, eds., *José Martí’s “Our America”: From National to Hemispheric Cultural Studies* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998), pp. 77–90, and “Supplying Demand: Walt Whitman as the Liberal Self,” in Bell Gale Chevigny and Gari Laguardia, eds., *Reinventing the Americas: Comparative Studies of Literature of the United States and Spanish America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 68–91; Sylvia Molloy, “His America, Our America: José Martí Reads Walt Whitman,” in Betsy Erkkila and Jay Grossman, eds., *Breaking Bounds: Whitman and American Cultural Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 83–91; and Enrico Mario Santi, “The Accidental Tourist: Walt Whitman in Latin America,” in Gustavo Pérez Firmat, ed., *Do the Americas Have a Common Literature?* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), pp. 156–76 (see also the considerable bibliography on pp. 364–65, n. 3, which includes the older study by Fernando Alegría, *Walt Whitman en Hispanoamérica* [Mexico City: Colección Studium, 1954]). Most recently, see the fascinating chapter on “Whitman’s Immersion in the ‘Spanish Element,’” in Kirsten Silva Gruesz, *Ambassadors of Culture: The Transamerican Origins of Latino Writing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. 121–35.
 41. F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. vii.
 42. The five writers at the center of Matthiessen’s study are Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, and Whitman. Though Matthiessen himself conceded that “it may not seem precisely accurate to refer to our mid-nineteenth century as a *re-birth*,” he justified his choice of terms by maintaining that “this was how the writers themselves judged it” (*American Renaissance*, p. vii). In fact, however, “renaissance” as a term encompassing the sensibility of contemporaneous US literary culture was used as early as 1829 by Samuel Knapp; see Giles Gunn, “The Kingdoms of Theory and the New Historicism in America,” *Yale Review* 76 (1987), pp. 207–36. The various forms of exclusion that Matthiessen’s study of “America’s . . . rightful heritage” entailed have been the subject of an ever-growing bibliography of critical reconsiderations of the period. Multiculturalist revisions of the concept of the American Renaissance include the first part of Eric Sundquist’s *To Wake the Nations: Race in the*

Making of American Literature (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993), a groundbreaking study of the mid-nineteenth century and the questions of slavery and revolution that includes a series of chapters – situated historically within a “New World” rather than a purely national context – that collectively depict “an American Renaissance seen largely from an African American perspective” (10). More recently, Timothy Powell offers “A Multicultural Interpretation of the American Renaissance,” the subtitle of a book that “aggressively challenges a Eurocentric conception of the canon and implicitly calls for every Americanist to more fully engage Native American, Mexican American, Asian American, black, and women’s literature and history as absolutely central to ‘American’ identity”; see Powell, *Ruthless Democracy*, p. 9. In addition to the works of Sundquist and Powell, see especially the essays collected in Walter Benn Michaels and Donald E. Pease, eds., *The American Renaissance Reconsidered: Selected Papers from the English Institute 1982–1983*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985). On critical consolidations of the period as a canonical formation by pre- and post-Matthiessen critics, see Donald Pease’s introduction to Pease, ed., *Revisionary Interventions into the Americanist Canon* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994), pp. 1–37. For a helpful recent overview, see Michael P. Kramer’s review essay “Imagining Authorship in America: ‘Whose American Renaissance?’ Reconsidered,” *American Literary History* 13 (2001): 108–125.

43. See especially Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).
44. Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 176. See also Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989). Habermas’s original account of the emergence of a modern public sphere was a historically specific one, and he himself initially expressed serious doubts about the existence of a truly public sphere after the eighteenth century; literary and cultural historians, of course, have since used the formulation to explore everything from late medieval to Victorian to contemporary postcolonial public spheres. For adaptations of the concept of a public sphere to the study of US culture in particular, see (among others) Warner, *Letters of the Republic*, as well as David Shields, *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); and Mary Ryan, *Civic Wars: Democracy and Public Life in the American City during the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), which seeks explicitly to “open a flank of the public sphere in the nineteenth century” (p. 6). On the question of women’s access to the US public sphere, see also Ryan’s essay “Gender and Public Access: Women’s Politics in Nineteenth-Century America,” in Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992), pp. 259–88. On the role of popular fiction in shaping the mid-nineteenth-century public sphere, especially in regard to the US-Mexican War, see Shelley

Streeby, “American Sensations: Empire, Amnesia, and the US-Mexican War,” *American Literary History* 13 (2001), pp. 1–40. Grantland S. Rice gives a more cynical response to Warner and the concept of a public sphere of eighteenth-century US writing and the republican ideology of print culture in *The Transformation of Authorship in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

45. Habermas himself has broadened his original specification of an inherently elite, bourgeois, rationalist public sphere in response to a number of his critics: “Apart from introducing a greater internal differentiation of the bourgeois public, . . . a different picture emerges if *from the very beginning* one admits the coexistence of competing public spheres and takes account of the dynamics of those processes of communication that are excluded from the dominant public sphere” as well as “the formation of several arenas where, beside the hegemonic bourgeois public sphere, additional subcultural or class-specific public spheres are constituted on the basis of their own and initially not easily reconcilable premises”; see Habermas, “Further Reflections on the Public Sphere,” in Calhoun, *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, p. 425. See also John L. Brooke, “Reason and passion in the public sphere: Habermas and the cultural historians,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 24 (1998), pp. 43–67, who points out the limitations of Habermas’s rationalistic model as applied to an American public sphere that was often defined by humor, wit, affect, and theatricality. For an extremely useful recent overview of the early US public sphere, see David Copeland, “America, 1750–1820,” in Hanna Barker and Simon Burrows, eds., *Press, Politics and the Public Sphere in Europe and North America, 1760–1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 140–58, who suggests that “the public sphere in America was broader than that of most European nations and that the American press was particularly powerful” (p. 142). As Copeland notes, “high literacy rates in America, which exceed 90 per cent in some regions by 1800, meant that even the poor were more often literate than not, and ensured that access to the public sphere was restricted neither by gender nor race. Thus people of colour and women could also voice their opinions and shape the public sphere to some degree, as could those who were motivated solely by religious beliefs” (140–41). On the public sphere in nineteenth-century Spain, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, see Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire and Antislavery: Spain, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, 1833–1874* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999).
46. Here I have in mind works such as Paul Gilroy’s *Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993) and its comparativist demystification of the cultural purities of nationalism; Sundquist’s *To Wake the Nations* and its “New World” rather than purely national lens; Joseph Roach’s *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996) and its meditation on the hybridization of local cultures through the hemispheric circulation of intercultural forms; and, most recently, Kirsten Silva Gruesz’s *Ambassadors of Culture*, a literary history of nineteenth-century Latino writings that demonstrates their integral relation

to the US national tradition. The work of Lois Parkinson Zamora, Vera Kutzinski, and Michael Dash, among many others, is making increasingly clear the complex interconnectedness among literary spheres and imaginaries in the Americas, as well as the hemispheric implications of what Zamora calls “a particularly American literary concern with a usable past.” See Zamora, “The Usable Past: The Idea of History in Modern US and Latin American Fiction,” in Pérez Firmat, *Do the Americas Have a Common Literature?*, p. 37, and, more generally, Zamora, *The Usable Past: The Imagination of History in Recent Fiction of the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Vera M. Kutzinski, *Against the American Grain: Myth and History in William Carlos Williams, Jay Wright, and Nicolás Guillén* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), and “American Literary History as Spatial Practice,” *American Literary History* 4 (1992), pp. 550–57; and Michael Dash, *The Other America: Caribbean Literature in a New World Context* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998); as well as Hortense J. Spillers, “Introduction: Who Cuts the Border? Some Readings on ‘America,’” in Spillers, ed., *Comparative American Identities: Race, Sex, and Nationality in the Modern Text* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 1–25; and the comparative American collections edited by Pérez Firmat, *Do the Americas Have a Common Literature?*; Belnap and Fernández, *José Martí’s “Our America”*; Chevigny and Laguardia, *Reinventing the Americas*; and Bainard Cowan and Jefferson Humphries, *Poetics of the Americas: Race, Founding, and Textuality* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997). A number of recent critics have pointed to the necessity of historicizing the transnational in comparative American studies: of rearticulating the “specific ‘politics of location’ at work,” as Carolyn Porter has put it, “in relation to a history that encompasses the entire post-Columbian period, including European colonialism”; see Porter, “‘What We Know That We Don’t Know’: Remapping American Literary Studies,” *American Literary History* 6 (1994), p. 506. See also Paul Jay, “The Myth of ‘America’ and the Politics of Location: Modernity, Border Studies, and the Literature of the Americas,” *American Quarterly* 54 (1998), pp. 165–92. Important studies by Amy Kaplan, Susan Gillman, John Carlos Rowe, and Werner Sollors, among others, envision a new historical consciousness that approaches empire as only one part of a multilingual continuum, enabling a better vision of what Gillman calls “the internationalism of national cultures”; see Susan Gillman, “*Ramona* in ‘Our America,’” in Belnap and Fernández, *José Martí’s “Our America”*, pp. 107–8. Werner Sollors advocates a “new historical consciousness” in the formulation of American transnationalism, cultivated specifically through the recovery of a multilingual literary past within the borders of the United States itself; see the introduction to Sollors, *Multilingual America*, pp. 7–8. Calling for the study of US culture to be relocated within the context of foreign relations, Amy Kaplan warns of the problems inherent in the “American historiographical trajectory of viewing empire as a twentieth-century aberration, rather than as part of an expansionist continuum” (see the introduction to Pease and Kaplan, *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, p. 17) – a continuum that begins in fact

with the Revolution, according to John Carlos Rowe's *Literary Culture and US Imperialism*. Gillman similarly envisions bringing together the paradigms of the Black Atlantic and the Spanish Borderlands in a new American studies that might take Cuba as an overlapping point in its revised focus – and “this is not the Cuba whose history begins in 1898,” she qualifies, but also colonial Cuba, “through which we might construct a comparative history”; see Gillman, “*Ramona* in Our America,” pp. 107–8.

47. José David Saldívar, *The Dialectics of Our America: Genealogy, Cultural Critique, and Literary History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991). See also Saldívar's *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies* (Berkeley: University of California Press: 1997) and his essay, “Looking Awry at 1898: Roosevelt, Montejó, Paredes, and Mariscal,” *American Literary History* 12 (2000), pp. 386–406. As Saldívar writes, “it is by examining the contact zones of the US-Mexico border, the spaces where the nation ends or begins, that we can begin destabilizing US nationalism, its nationalist historiography, and its various centers” (“Looking Awry,” p. 388).
48. See, for example, Anne E. Goldman's introductory chapter, “Location, Location, Location: Complicating Transnational Readings of American Literary History,” in *Continental Divides: Revisioning American Literature* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 1–20.
49. William Henry Hurlbert, “The Poetry of Spanish America,” *The North American Review* 68 (1849), pp. 135, 131.
50. Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 11.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
52. Édouard Glissant, for example, proposes a twentieth-century hemispheric “irruption into [literary] modernity,” a “brutal emergence” occurring in the absence of any “tradition that has slowly matured” and resulting in a truly “New World” writing that is itself “the product of a system of modernity”; see Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, trans. J. Michael Dash (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989), p. 149. Moving even closer to the current period, Bainard Cowan draws on Glissant's theorization of a Caribbean aesthetic to argue that new literary forms become uniquely possible in the Americas of “our present time” when “certainty of identity . . . is once again broken”; see the Introduction to Cowan and Humphries, *Poetics of the Americas*, pp. 4–5. Indeed, “in our urban archipelagos,” muses James Clifford of the contemporary moment, “we are all Caribbeans now”; see Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 173. Overviews of recent scholarship in comparative American studies as well as transnational and international American studies include (in addition to those cited in the preceding notes) essays by Carolyn Porter, “What We Know That We Don't Know,” pp. 467–526; Gregory Jay, “The End of ‘American’ Literature: Toward a Multicultural Practice,” *College English* 53 (1991), pp. 264–81; Cyrus R. K.

Patell, "Comparative American Studies: Hybridity and Beyond," *American Literary History* 11 (1999), pp. 166–86; Priscilla Wald, "Minefields and Meeting Grounds: Transnational Analyses and American Studies," *American Literary History* 10 (1998), pp. 199–218; Jane Desmond and Virginia Domínguez, "Resituating American Studies in a Critical Internationalism," *American Quarterly* 48 (September 1996), pp. 475–90; and most recently, Djelal Kadir's "Introduction: America and Its Studies," *PMLA* 119 (2003), pp. 9–24. The term "New World studies" has been promoted by Michael Dash, who calls it "an unavoidable compromise" in avoiding the exclusionary frame of reference inherent in the terms "American studies" and "American literature"; focusing on the Caribbean, Dash outlines a "New World perspective [that] concerns itself with establishing new connections, not only among the islands of the archipelago but also exploring the region [as that which] holds the Americas together" – a field of study that he hopes will "wrest the term free from its original connotations and allow for a new perspective on the Americas as a whole and the Caribbean in particular" (Dash, *The Other America*, pp. 1–3). See also Roland Greene, "Wanted: A New World Studies," *American Literary History* 12 (2000), pp. 337–47, who defines New World studies as a field in which "the fictions of national identity are under pressure" – "a set of practices that investigate the givenness of local, national, and transamerican worldviews through the collation of literary representation and social fact," excavating from the literary text "its investments in matters that run beyond national boundaries and enter it in a transnational dialogue" (pp. 339, 337). The New World studies imagined by Greene is in no way limited to the twentieth century, though his essay reviews scholarship focused largely on contemporary writing. See also Greene, "New World Studies and the Limits of National Narratives," *Stanford Humanities Review* 6 (1998), pp. 88–110; as well as the recent collection edited by Monika Kaup and Debra Rosenthal, *Mixing Race, Mixing Culture: Inter-American Literary Dialogues* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002). While the comparative American or "New World" fields are organized around and effectively limited to the greater Americas, transnationalist inquiry within American studies more generally has also located US cultural history and literary production within much broader geographical arenas, including Europe, Asia, and Africa. See, for example, the "Atlanticist" perspective adopted in James Dunkerley's *Americana: The Americas in the World, around 1850* (London and New York: Verso, 2000); Paul Giles, *Transatlantic Insurrections: British Culture and the Formation of American Literature, 1730–1860* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); and a number of the essays collected in Donald Pease and Robyn Wiegman, eds. *The Futures of American Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002) and Donald Pease, ed., *National Identities and Post-Americanist Narratives* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994).

53. Belnap and Fernández, Introduction to José Martí's "Our America", p. 4.

54. Deborah Shnoorkal and Mirta Muñoz, eds., Introduction to *The José Martí Reader: Writings on the Americas* (Melbourne and New York: Ocean Press, 1999), p. 26.

55. Much of the most interesting work in this vein has been offered by scholars of African American literature; see in particular the primary sources collected in Vincent Carretta, ed., *Unchained Voices: An Anthology of Black Authors in the English-Speaking World of the Eighteenth Century* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996); as well as the collection edited by Carretta and Philip Gould, *Genius in Bondage: Literature of the Early Black Atlantic* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001). For a study of early North and Latin American literature, see Earl E. Fitz, *Rediscovering the New World: Inter-American Literature in a Comparative Context* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1991). For a comprehensive overview of inter-American studies of all periods, there is also Fitz's electronic annotated bibliography at www.uiowa.edu/~uiowapress/interamerican.
56. Especially insightful here are Eric Wertheimer's chapters "Pre-Colombian Worlds and Philip Freneau's Literature of American Empire" and "Joel Barlow's Scripting and Subscribing of Ancient America," in *Imagined Empires: Incas, Aztecs, and the New World of American Literature 1771–1876* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 17–51, 52–90.
57. Giles, *Transatlantic Insurrections*; Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001). See also, among many other recent studies in this vein, Rebecca Ann Bach, *Colonial Transformations: The Cultural Production of the New Atlantic World, 1580–1640* (New York: Palgrave, 2000); David Hall and Hugh Amory, eds., *The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World: A History of the Book in America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), vol. 1; Ned C. Landsman, *From Colonials to Provincials: American Thought and Culture, 1680–1760* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); Nicholas Canny, "Writing Atlantic History; or, Reconfiguring the History of Colonial British America," *Journal of American History* 86 (1999), pp. 1093–1114; lucid overviews of many of these issues in Giles's essays "Virtual Americas: The Internationalization of American Studies and the Ideology of Exchange," *American Quarterly* 50 (1998), pp. 523–47, and "Transnationalism and Classic American Literature," *PMLA* 118 (2003), pp. 62–77; Dana D. Nelson's long review article on the colonial American period, "From Manitoba to Patagonia," *American Literary History* 15 (2003), pp. 367–394; and John Carlos Rowe, "Nineteenth-Century United States Literary Culture and Transnationality," which provides an especially useful discussion of the term "transnational" in various historical contexts (pp. 78–79).
58. Gruesz, *Ambassadors of Culture*, p. 210.
59. Wilson Harris, *The Womb of Space: The Cross-Cultural Imagination* (Westport: Greenwood, 1983), p. xviii. See Vera Kutzinski's use of Wilson Harris as a point of departure for rethinking American Studies in "Borders and Bodies: The United States, America, and the Caribbean," *New Centennial Review* 1 (2001), pp. 53–86, as well as Kutzinski's earlier interview with Harris, "The Composition of Reality: A Talk with Wilson Harris," *Callaloo* 18 (1995), pp. 15–32, in particular on the distinctions Harris draws between "multiculturalism" and the "cross-cultural imagination."

60. Herman Melville, "Hawthorne and His Mosses by a Virginian Spending July in Vermont," in *The Piazza Tales and Other Prose Pieces* (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press and Newberry Library, 1987), p. 239.
61. Walt Whitman, "Poetry To-Day in America – Shakspeare – The Future," in *Complete Poetry and Selected Prose* (New York: Library of America, 1992), p. 661.
62. Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Mrs. Hutchinson," *Miscellaneous Prose*, p. 67.
63. Margaret Fuller, "American Literature; Its Position in the Present Time, and Prospects for the Future," in *Papers on Literature and Art* (London: Wiley and Putnam, 1846), p. 124.
64. Margaret Cohen and Carolyn Dever, *The Literary Channel: The Inter-National Invention of the Novel* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 27.
65. On the limitations of nationalist historiographical models for the writing of Chicano literary history in particular, see Manuel Martín-Rodríguez, "'A Net Made of Holes': Toward a Cultural History of Chicano Literature," *Modern Language Quarterly* 62 (2001), pp. 1–18.

2 SCATTERED TRADITIONS: THE TRANSAMERICAN GENEALOGIES OF *JICOTÉNCAL*

1. William Cullen Bryant, review of *Jicoténcal*, *United States Review and Literary Gazette* (February 1827), p. 337.
2. Bryant, review of *Jicoténcal*, p. 337.
3. See Charles H. Brown, *William Cullen Bryant* (New York: Scribner's, 1971), p. 136.
4. The novel has recently been published in a critical edition as part of the *Recovering the US Hispanic Literary Heritage* Series as Félix Varela, *Jicoténcal*, ed. Luis Leal and Rodolfo J. Cortina (Houston: Arte Público, 1995); an English translation has appeared under the title *Xicoténcatl: An anonymous historical novel about the events leading up to the conquest of the Aztec empire*, Texas Pan American Series, trans. Guillermo I. Castillo-Feliú (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999). All subsequent quotations from *Jicoténcal* will come from these two editions unless otherwise indicated, and page numbers will be given in parentheses.
5. Alejandro González Acosta, *El enigma de Jicoténcal: Estudio de dos novelas sobre el héroe de Tlaxcala* (Mexico: Instituto Tlaxcalteca de Cultura, Gobierno del Estado de Tlaxcala, 1997).
6. Doris Sommer, *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Margaret Cohen and Carolyn Dever, eds., *The Literary Channel: The Inter-National Invention of the Novel* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002).
7. "Alliance of the Southern Republics," review of H. Coronel D. Bernardo Monteagudo's *Ensayo sobre la necesidad de una federación general entre los estados hispanoamericanos, y plan de su organización*, *North American Review* (hereafter *NAR*) 22.50 (January 1826), p. 162.

8. Ibid., pp. 162, 164.
9. Ibid., pp. 168, 167.
10. "Colección de los Viajes y Descubrimientos . . . por Don Martin Fernández de Navarrete," part 2, *NAR* 24.55 (April 1827), p. 266.
11. "Colección de los Viajes," part 1, *NAR* (October 1826), p. 487.
12. "Alliance of the Southern Republics," p. 175.
13. Bryant, review of *Jicoténcal*, pp. 336, 343–44.
14. Ibid., p. 345.
15. According to "Mr. Poinsett's Notes on Mexico" (*NAR* 20.46 [January 1825], p. 78), Bolívar considered it "a miracle that [the federal] model in North America has existed with so much prosperity."
16. "Alliance of the Southern Republics," p. 174.
17. "Colección de los Viajes," Part 2, pp. 286–87.
18. "Colección de los Viajes," Part 2, pp. 266, 265; part 1, p. 487.
19. "Colección de los Viajes," Part 1, p. 487.
20. "Colección de los Viajes," Part 2, p. 266.
21. "Mr. Poinsett's Notes on Mexico," pp. 77, 98.
22. In fact, though it is historically accurate that the Tlaxcalans did not have salt, they had been great traders until the Mexica restricted their commerce; on their trading history see Hugh Thomas, *Conquest: Montezuma, Cortés, and the Fall of Old Mexico* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), p. 239.
23. On the political status of Tlaxcala, see Thomas, *Conquest*, pp. 238–39; on Cortés's comparison to the Italian republics, see pp. 239–40.
24. The Mexican Constitution of 1824 was in fact modeled closely on the separation-of-powers clause in the US Constitution of 1787, though in several ways the Mexican federal system gave even greater power to its states than did the US model (e.g., the president was to be elected by the state legislatures). See *The Course of Mexican History*, ed. Michael C. Meyer et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 301–4.
25. "Colección de los Viajes," Part 2, p. 276.
26. "Art. V: Republic of Central America," *NAR* 26.58 (January 1828), pp. 127–46. The citation is from p. 132.
27. Bryant, review of *Jicoténcal*, p. 343.
28. These adaptations include Ignacio Torres Arroyo's *Teutila* (1828), José María Moreno y Buenvecino's *Xicohténcatl* (1828), and José María Mangino's *Xicoténcatl* (1929). See Leal's discussion of these works in Introducción, *Jicoténcal*, pp. xvii–xviii.
29. John Lloyd Read, *The Mexican Historical Novel, 1826–1910* (New York: Instituto de las Españas en los Estados Unidos, 1939); Antonio Castro Leal, *La novela del México colonial* (Mexico: Aguilar, 1964).
30. See, for example, David William Foster's *Mexican Literature: A Historical Edition*, Texas Pan American Series (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994).
31. Cited in Leal, "Introducción," in *Jicoténcal*, p. xx.
32. Luis Leal, "Jicoténcal, Primera Novela Histórica en Castellano," *Revista Iberoamericana* 25 (1960), pp. 9–31.

33. Alejandro González Acosta, *El enigma de Jicoténcal*, p. 139. Heredia's family was in Mexico when his only brother died; his father also died in Mexico in 1820. So Heredia's connection to Mexico was formed long before he emigrated in 1825 to spend the rest of his life there; see Julio Garceran de Vall, *Heredia y la libertad* (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1978).
34. Rodolfo Cortina, for example, defines Jicoténcal as both "the first Cuban novel published in the United States and the first Cuban-American novel"; see "Cuban Literature of the United States: 1824–1959," in Ramón Gutiérrez and Genaro M. Padilla, eds., *Recovering the US Hispanic Literary Heritage* (Houston: Arte Público, 1993), vol. i, pp. 78–79.
35. Leal offers a partial list of Spanish-speaking writers residing in Philadelphia or New York around the time *Jicoténcal* was published, including (among others) Domingo del Monte, Tomás Gener, Gaspar Betancourt Cisneros, José de la Luz Caballero, José Antonio Saco, and José Teurbe Tolón; see Introducción, *Jicoténcal*, pp. xxiii–xxiv.
36. Castillo-Feliú, for example, notes that the prose of *Jicoténcal* is at times "incorrect and imitative of the French style often seen in Hispanic writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries" (Introduction to *Xicoténcatl*, p. 2).
37. See, respectively, Sandra Messinger Cypess, *La Malinche in Mexican Literature: From History to Myth*, Texas Pan American Series (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), pp. 42–56; Rodolfo Cortina, "Varela's *Jicoténcal* and the Historical Novel," in María Herrera-Sobek and Virginia Sánchez Korrol, eds., *Recovering the US Hispanic Literary Heritage* (Houston: Arte Público, 2000), vol. 3, pp. 450–55; and Castillo-Feliú, Introduction to *Xicoténcatl*, p. 3.
38. In this respect, Castillo-Feliú may be following Castro Leal, who first changes the spelling of the title in *La novela del México colonial*.
39. On hispanophone print culture of the northeastern United States in the 1820s, see the magisterial bibliography compiled by Nicolás Kanellos and Helvetia Martell, *Hispanic Periodicals in the United States, Origins to 1960: A Brief History and Comprehensive Bibliography* (Houston: Arte Público, 2000); Leal's Introducción in *Jicoténcal* also gives a useful description of revolutionary hispanophone Philadelphia during the 1820s.
40. Nicolás Kanellos, foreword to *Recovering the US Hispanic Literary Heritage*, vol. 1, p. 13; Gutiérrez and Padilla, Introduction to *Recovering the US Hispanic Literary Heritage*, vol. 1, p. 21.
41. Gutiérrez and Padilla, Introduction, p. 17. On the use of the term "hispanic" for this series, see pp. 17–18. The implications of this recovery project for the future of comparative American literary studies are vast: the editors seek in part to document the ways in which Latin American "wars of resistance against territorial annexation by the United States gave literary voice" to the US hispanic tradition (Introduction, p. 20).
42. Leal, Introducción, p. xxxvi.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.

46. Alide Cagidemetro, “‘The Rest of the Story’; or, Multilingual American Literature,” in Werner Sollors, ed., *Multilingual America: Transnationalism, Ethnicity, and the Languages of American Literature* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1998), p. 23.
47. The del Monte *tertulia* in Cuba of the 1830s and 1840s offers a classic model of such secretive and collaborative transmissions: in the mid-1830s, for example, del Monte requested that Juan Francisco Manzano, a Cuban poet and slave, write an autobiography of his experiences in slavery; del Monte then commissioned Anselmo Suárez y Romero to copy and edit the material before delivering it in secret to the British abolitionist Richard Robert Madden, who smuggled the work from Cuba and published it anonymously with some of Manzano’s poems under the title *Poems by a Slave of the Island of Cuba, recently liberated* (1840). See further discussion of del Monte in Chapter Four.
48. Leal, *Introducción*, p. xiii; and Rodolfo Cortina, “Cuban Literature of the United States: 1824–1959),” in *Recovering the US Hispanic Literary heritage*, vol. 1, p. 73. Cortina, following Poyo, states that Heredia founded *El Habanero*; see Gerald Eugene Poyo, *With All, And For the Good of All: The Emergence of Popular Nationalism in the Cuban Communities of the United States, 1848–1898* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), though other sources indicate that Varela was the initial founder. For Varela’s contributions, see Félix Varela y Morales, *El Habanero: papel político, científico y literario* (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1991).
49. Varela was condemned to death in absentia in 1823 (see Cortina, “Varela’s *Jicoténcal* and the Historical Novel,” p. 450). Heredia, already in the United States, was also sentenced in absentia to exile in December 1824; see Julio Garceran de Vall, *Heredia y la libertad*, p. 248.
50. González Acosta, *El enigma de Jicoténcal*, p. 142. In addition to González Acosta’s study, the following account is drawn from Garceran de Vall, *Heredia y la libertad*; Heredia, *Poesías, discursos y cartas*, vol. i, ed. María Lacoste de Arufe (Havana: Cultural S.A., 1939), pp. clxxv–cx cvi; and a number of the studies cited in the notes below.
51. There were in fact two letters in which Heredia informed del Monte about his work on the figure of Xicoténcatl, which he was apparently undertaking in 1823 (the work continues to be listed in his bibliography, though it has never been found; see Lacoste de Arufe’s notes in Heredia, *Poesías*, p. clxxx). Both Heredia’s letters appear to reply to questions del Monte had raised about the work Heredia had once talked of doing on the subject of Xicoténcatl; it is likely that del Monte was trying to deduce the author of the anonymous *Jicoténcal*, which had been published that year, and which recalled the subject that Heredia had once spoken of treating. In the first of Heredia’s letters, dated November 18, 1826, he tells del Monte that he is still vacillating between a work on the subject of Xicoténcatl and one on the subject of Cuatlopococa; in the second letter, dated April 15, 1827, Heredia says he has definitely chosen the subject of Cuatlopococa – though he appears never to have published any such work. It seems, then, that Heredia may have been using these letters, written

- in the same year of *Jicoténcal*'s anonymous publication, to mislead del Monte; see González Acosta, *El enigma de Jicoténcal*, pp. 126 and 139–40, n. 115.
52. The friend was in fact Rocafuerte, discussed below; see Garceran de Vall, *Heredia y la libertad*, p. 145. See also González Acosta, *El enigma de Jicoténcal*, p. 138.
 53. Manuel García Garófalo y Mesa, *Vida de José María Heredia en México, 1825–1839* (Mexico: Ediciones Botas, 1945), p. 317.
 54. For example, Heredia gave del Monte "*carta blanca*" to make editorial changes in preparing a third edition of his poetry; see Garceran de Vall, *Heredia y la libertad*, p. 175. He also asked his friend Tomás Gener to have Varela or José Antonio Saco edit another edition; see Heredia, *Poesías, discursos y cartas*, p. 259. I do not mean to suggest, however, that Heredia's literary career came to a halt in Mexico; on the contrary, he continued to write and publish there, becoming a foundational figure in Mexican print culture, inaugurating three important journals, *El Iris*, *Miscelánea*, and *Minerva*; on this aspect of his career, see Kirsten Silva Gruesz, *Ambassadors of Culture: The Transamerican Origins of Latino Writing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 37.
 55. González Acosta contends that the deism of the author of *Jicoténcal* is incompatible with the Catholic priest Varela (*El enigma de Jicoténcal*, pp. 132–33). Moreover, Cortina, though he supports the notion that Varela was the author, notes that Varela "always kept his personal faith" and continued in the United States to serve the Irish immigrants of New York, founding Catholic parishes and ultimately becoming Vicar General ("Varela's *Jicoténcal* and the Historical Novel," pp. 451, 452). In Cortina's argument for Varela as the writer of *Jicoténcal*, this constitutes "the main reason for hiding his authorship of the novel": "the speeches which he attributes to the indigenous populace reveal a dichotomy in his thought about the Church which is very dangerous flowing from a priest's pen" (p. 451). Yet Varela's contempt for anonymous writings, discussed below, would seem to call Cortina's explanation into question.
 56. Garceran de Vall, *Heredia y la libertad*, p. 31.
 57. See Félix Varela, *Escritos políticos*, ed. Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring (Havana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1977), pp. 188 and 216.
 58. See, for example, the articles "Diálogo que han tenido en esta ciudad un español partidario de la independencia de la isla de Cuba y un paisano suyo anti independiente" and "Persecución de este papel en la isla de Cuba," in Varela, *El Habanero: papel político, científico y literario*, pp. 105–9 and 140–45, respectively.
 59. On Rocafuerte's iconoclastic position relative to the Catholic Church, see *Vicente Rocafuerte: epistolario*, selected and edited by Carlos Landázuri Camacho and Juan José Flores (Quito: Banco Central del Ecuador, Centro de Investigación y Cultura, 1988), p. 519. There is a fascinating similarity between this prose style and that of various polemical speeches in *Jicoténcal*. Explaining that he does not at all mind being called a heretic, Rocafuerte writes, "Le aseguro que lejos de enfadarme porque me hagan pasar por hereje, me lleno

de ufana complacencia y les agradezco la circulación de esta noticia, porque hereje en el vocabulario del siglo 19 significa hombre ilustrado, que no sigue el vulgar sendero de añejas preocupaciones y cuya razón despejada es superior a los errores, que un clero astuto sabe cubrir del manto del egoísmo religioso, para engañar a los pueblos y sacar de su credulidad el dinero que necesitan. Mientras más repitan que soy un grandísimo herejote, tanto más honor me hacen, pues es lo mismo que decir que en medio de tanta ignorancia y de tanta superstición, no falta un verdadero ecuatoriano que sostenga con desinterés y firmeza los principios del siglo y que impertérrito campeón de la libertad racional, considerada bajo todos sus aspectos, se ha desdeñado de cubrirse con la máscara de la hipocresía, que siempre está de moda entre los fanáticos y esclavos de Roma.” (“I assure you that far from becoming angry because they cast me as a heretic, I am filled with a satisfied complacency and I thank them for the circulation of this piece of news, because heretic in the vocabulary of the nineteenth century signifies an erudite man who does not follow the common path of stale concerns and whose unclouded reason is superior to the errors that an astute cleric knows how to conceal under the mantle of religious egoism in order to deceive the people and to take from their credulity the money that they need. The more they repeat that I am a great big old heretic, the more honor they do me, for it's the same thing as saying that in the middle of so much ignorance and so much superstition, there is still one true Ecuadorian who upholds with disinterest and firmness the principles of the century and that unflappable champion of rational liberty, considered under all its aspects, has disdained to cover himself with the mask of hypocrisy that is always in style among the fanatics and slaves of Rome.”) See also p. 294: “La ambición clerical es mil veces más fatal a la América que todas las ambiciones militares.” (“Clerical ambition is a thousand times more fatal to America than all military ambitions combined.”) The most notable instance of anonymity in Rocafuerte's writings is his *Bosquejo ligerísimo de la revolución de Méjico: desde el grito de Iguala hasta la proclamación imperial de Iturbide* (1822), signed simply, “Por un verdadero americano” (“By a true American”). The anonymous “Rasgo imparcial” has also been attributed to Rocafuerte, according to José Fernández de Castro's notes to *Vicente Rocafuerte: un americano libre*, Biblioteca enciclopédica popular 141 (Mexico: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1947), p. 31; there are also a number of probable anonymous contributions included in *El Argos*, according to Neptalí Zúñiga, *Colección Rocafuerte*, vol. x (Quito: del Gobierno del Ecuador, 1947), p. vii, who notes that “gran parte de su trabajo intelectual se encuentra disperso y perdido en la literatura cubana de los años de 1820 al 1823” (“a large part of his intellectual work was scattered and lost within Cuban literature of the years 1820–1823”). See also the discussion of *Bosquejo* below.

60. The biographical information on Rocafuerte that follows comes from Kent B. Mecum, *Vicente Rocafuerte: el prócer andante* (Guayaquil: Banco Central del Ecuador, 1983), as well as from Camacho's Introduction to *Vicente Rocafuerte: epistolario*.

61. See Irene Diggs, "Color in Colonial Spanish America," *Journal of Negro History* 38 (1953), pp. 403–27. In this assertion, Diggs follows Rodrigo A. Chávez González, *El mestizaje y su influencia social en América* (Guayaquil: Imprenta y talleres municipales, 1937). However, as Rocafuerte's biographer, Mecum makes no mention of any racial mixture in Rocafuerte's ancestry.
62. Leal locates *Jicoténcal* as the first indigenist novel of the Americas, followed by the Mexican novel *Netzula* in 1832 by José María Lafruga, the Peruvian novel *Gonzalo Pizarro* in 1839 by Manuel Ascencio Segura, and the Cuban novel *Guatimozín, último emperador de México* in 1846 by Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda (Introducción, p. xxxv). Castro Leal (who adopts the Mexican spelling, referring to the novel in his study *Xicoténcatl*) also defines *Jicoténcal* as the first "novela indigenista" (p. 16).
63. The most notable example here is *Bosquejo*; see the discussion of this work below.
64. See the letter to Tomás Gener and Varela in Garófalo y Mesa, *Vida de José María Heredia en México*, p. 317, in which Heredia asks for his remaining works to be sold at any price.
65. Mecum, *Vicente Rocafuerte: el procér andante*, p. 47. See also Mecum's discussion of the Cuban secret society Soles y Rayos de Bolívar and its choice of Rocafuerte as a representative in the United States, where he was to use his wealth in the sponsoring of political writings (p. 42); Rocafuerte was also known to commission the completion of unfinished writings while publishing hispanoamerican writers and news of Latin America in *Ocios* (pp. 100–1). See also Rocafuerte, *Colección Epistolarios*, p. 69, on his role as a patron.
66. Both Rocafuerte and Heredia belonged to Soles y Rayos, which had significant Masonic connections; see Garceran de Vall, *Heredia y la libertad*, pp. 27 and 172; and Garófalo y Mesa, *Vida de José María Heredia en México*, pp. 187–88. See also González Acosta's discussion of the novel's Masonic rhetoric and symbolism in *El enigma de Jicoténcal*, p. 96. Other examples of such Masonic language within *Jicoténcal* can be found on pp. 21 and 86 (in the Arte Público Spanish-language edition). On Varela's contempt for secret societies, see Varela, *Escritos políticos*, p. 3, where he contends that such organizations are essentially worthless; p. 4, where he claims to have done a careful study of secret societies and again finds them worthless; and p. 8, where he alleges that such societies can have a political intolerance more cruel than religious intolerance. For examples of the characteristic use of "interín" and "en el interín" in other Rocafuerte writings, see *Vicente Rocafuerte: epistolario*, pp. 175, 375, 399, 552, 577, 632, and 727. Leal notes the shared use of these phrases on the part of Rocafuerte and the anonymous author of *Jicoténcal*, but dismisses the coincidence as too minor to constitute a case for Rocafuerte as the author without more evidence (Introducción, pp. xxvi–xxvii); he also here notes an article outlining a case for Rocafuerte as the potential author, but the citation is inaccurate and I have not been able to locate it.
67. Rocafuerte had a number of family members and friends in Mexico, including his sister's husband, who was at one point slated to take part in Iturbide's

government, which Rocafuerte came to oppose vehemently (see *Vicente Rocafuerte: epistolario*, p. 49); in fact, Rocafuerte's secret society in Cuba had received urgent requests from various Mexican patriots for help in throwing off the constraints of the Iturbide government, against which he would later raise his voice repeatedly, if anonymously (see Fernández de Castro, *Vicente Rocafuerte: un americano libre*, pp. 31–2 and 59 as well as the discussion of *Bosquejo* below). Rocafuerte's interest in Mexico extended to its indigenous people and history as well: he wrote a prologue to José Joaquín de Olmedo's 1812 discourse in defense of the Indians (see Zuñiga, *Colección Rocafuerte*, p. xxi) and would later refer to Mexico as the "opulento Anáhuac . . . mi patria adoptiva" (Fernández de Castro, *Vicente Rocafuerte: un americano libre*, p. 62). Finally, Rocafuerte had personal reasons to avoid putting his name to any criticism, veiled or otherwise, of the Mexican government owing to his appointment as Mexico's Ambassador to England in the year in which *Jicoténcal* was published. Heredia, as already noted, had a documented interest in both Mexican politics and the literary potential of its indigenous history; see Garófalo y Mesa, *Vida de José María Heredia en México*, on "su interés decidido a los problemas mexicanos," p. 153; as Garceran de Vall notes, a major theme in his poetry is the longing for freedom in Mexico (*Heredia y la libertad*, p. 100); and he later published two articles congratulating Mexico on overthrowing Iturbide (p. 31). Heredia contributed his famous poem "A los habitantes de Anáhuac" to appear at the end of Rocafuerte's *Bosquejo*, which was extremely critical of the Iturbide government. Heredia chose not to sign this poem on Mexico's indigenous past because he knew he might later need asylum in Mexico (see Garceran de Vall, *Heredia y la libertad*, p. 31).

68. On Rocafuerte's critique of Iturbide and the problems of tyranny in Mexico in his anonymous *Bosquejo*, see Fernández de Castro, *Vicente Rocafuerte: Un americano libre*, p. 59; and Rocafuerte, *Vicente Rocafuerte: epistolario*, pp. 49–51.
69. Camacho's Introduction to *Vicente Rocafuerte: epistolario*, for example, notes that Rocafuerte was throughout his life "un recio, un poderoso polemista" (p. 16), a writer who believed in shaping public opinion through the polemical publications of secret societies (p. 38). As already noted, Mexican patriots explicitly asked Rocafuerte's secret society in Cuba to fight Iturbide through the press. See also Mecum, *Vicente Rocafuerte*, on his propagandistic mission in *Bosquejo* (p. 53).
70. Mecum, *Vicente Rocafuerte*, p. 53.
71. For example, Rocafuerte created an anagram of his own name (Rocafuerte y Bejarno) as the alleged press that produced *Bosquejo*: TERACROUEF y NAROAJEB (see Mecum, *Vicente Rocafuerte*, p. 53). He also published *Ideas necesarias a todo pueblo* (1821) to appear as if it had been produced in Philadelphia when it was actually published in Havana; this was a common practice in nineteenth-century Cuba – a means of protecting Cuban publishers from colonial sanctions (see Mecum, *Vicente Rocafuerte*, p. 43). Rocafuerte also strategically addressed *Ideas* to his beloved countrymen of Guayaquil when in fact the work was implicitly directed at Mexican readers – another tactic designed to

- avoid the repercussions of criticizing the Mexican government (see Rocafuerte, *Vicente Rocafuerte: epistolario*, p. 49).
72. Rocafuerte, *Vicente Rocafuerte: epistolario*, pp. 45–46.
 73. For example, Rocafuerte wrote a work called *Cartas de un americano sobre las ventajas de los gobiernos republicanos federativos* (see Fernández de Castro, *Vicente Rocafuerte, un americano libre*, p. 50). As noted, he also presented *Bosquejo* as the work of “un verdadero americano” (p. 36). As a writer and political thinker, Rocafuerte consistently stated his belief that all Spanish America was his country (p. 42); as Mecum notes, citing Benjamín Carrión, Rocafuerte “pertenece a aquella época privilegiada en que las zanjas nacionales no se habían cavado aún profundamente, y podía la América Latina darse el lujo de tener hombres que, nacidos en cualquier lugar del inmenso territorio latinoamericano, eran en realidad ciudadanos de todo el continente” (“belongs to that privileged epoch in which the national entrenchments were not yet dug so deeply, and Latin America still had the luxury of having men who, born in whatever part of the immense Latin American territory, were in reality citizens of all the continent”) (Mecum, *Vicente Rocafuerte*, p. 229).
 74. See “José Antonio Miralla, Ensayo de Biográfica Política,” in *José Antonio Miralla y sus trabajos*, compiled and edited by Francisco J. Ponte Domínguez (La Habana: Publicaciones del Archivo Nacional de Cuba LLL, 1960), pp. 64–65.
 75. *A History of Literature in the Caribbean* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1994) vol. i, pp. 144–45.
 76. For the history of the Tlaxcalans during and after the Conquest, see Charles Gibson, *Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967); on early Tlaxcalan histories that present them as allies of the Spaniards (somewhat earlier than they probably were in actuality), see p. 194; on Xicoténcatl’s promotion of a Tlaxcalan alliance with the Aztecs, see pp. 25–26.
 77. Leal, Introducción, xvii. On Bryant at the Salazars, see Chapter Four.
 78. Leal, Introducción, pp. xvii–xix; González Acosta, *El enigma de Jicoténcal*, p. xx.
 79. See Doris Sommer, “Plagiarized Authenticity: Sarmiento’s Cooper and Others,” in Gustavo Pérez Firmat, ed., *Do the Americas Have a Common Literature?*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), pp. 130–55.
 80. Some critics, however, have disputed the idea that *Jicoténcal* was modeled after Scott’s historical novels; on the dispute over Scott or Alfred de Vigny as the literary model for the novel, see González Acosta, *El enigma de Jicoténcal*, pp. 33–38, and especially his summary of the debate between Enrique Anderson Imbert and Rojas Garcidueñas, pp. 124–25.
 81. *La correspondance entre Domingo del Monte et Alexander Hill Everett*, ed. Sophie Andioc Torres, Publications de l’Equipe de recherche de l’Université Paris VIII Histoire des Antilles hispaniques 13 (Paris: Harmattan, 1994), p. 49.
 82. Introduction to Varela, *El Habanero*, xxv. On Del Monte more generally, see Chapter Four.
 83. Andioc Torres, *La correspondance entre Domingo del Monte et Alexander Hill Everett*, pp. 49–50.

84. Heredia translated *Waverly* as *Waverly, ó Ahora sesenta años: novela histórica* (Mexico: Imprenta de Galvan a cargo de Mariano Arevalo, 1833).
85. Heredia vehemently rejected the form of the historical novel while del Monte exalted it; see Fernando Ainsa and Alexis Márquez Rodríguez, *Raíces de la novela histórica* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1991), p. 50.
86. On Heredia in a transamerican context, see Gruesz, *Ambassadors of Culture*, pp. 30–47.
87. See Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624–1713* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), pp. 336–37.
88. Indian slaves were in fact one of New England's "most valuable wartime commodities"; those sold into slavery included King Philip's own son. See Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), especially Chapter Six, "A Dangerous Merchandise," pp. 150–72.
89. On the differences among racial ideologies in the British West Indies and the future United States, see especially Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, pp. 224–62.
90. John Singleton, *A General Description of the West-Indian Islands* (Barbados: Esmand and Walker, 1767), Book IV, lines 531–37.
91. James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*, Introduction and Notes by John McWilliams (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 204. All subsequent quotations will come from this edition, and page numbers will be given in parentheses.
92. Cooper's use of Heckewelder has been controversial since the initial publication of the novel because of the historian's obvious bias in favor of the Delaware and against the Iroquois; see John McWilliams, Notes to the Oxford edition of *The Last of the Mohicans*, p. 426. Cooper's other sources include Jonathan Carver's *Travels* and David Humphreys's *An Essay on the Life of the Honorable Major-General Israel Putnam* (1788). On Cooper, nationalism, and historical understanding more generally, see Winifred Farrant Bevilacqua, "Fictional Design and Historical Vision in *The Last of the Mohicans*," in George A. Test, ed., *James Fenimore Cooper: His Country and His Art* (Oneonta: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 114–25; Lora Romero, "Vanishing Americans: Gender, Empire, and New Historicism," *American Literary History* 63 (1991), pp. 385–404; Gary Ashwill, "Savagism and Its Discontents: James Fenimore Cooper and His Native American Contemporaries," *American Transcendental Quarterly* 8 (1994), pp. 211–27; and Forrest G. Robinson, "Uncertain Borders: Race, Sex, and Civilization in *The Last of the Mohicans*," *Arizona Quarterly* 5 (1993), pp. 231–49.
93. See especially Susan Scheckel's chapter on Cooper and questions of Indian land rights in *The Insistence of the Indian: Race and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 15–40. More generally, see Lucy Maddox, *Removals: Nineteenth-Century*

American Literature and the Politics of Indian Affairs (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

94. "The Pioneers . . . and The Last of the Mohicans . . .," *NAR* 23.52 (July 1826), pp. 150–97; citation from p. 162.
95. *Ibid.*, p. 163.
96. On Cooper's depiction of Native American languages, see Lawrence Rosenwald's observations in Sollors, *Multilingual America*, ed. Sollors., pp. 329–35.
97. Teutilla in fact lived on as a character in the Mexican plays produced in Puebla during the 1820s; see Leal, *Introducción*, pp. xvii–xviii; and Cypess, *La Malinche in Mexican Literature*, p. 44.
98. It should be noted that the novel's condemnation of the Spaniards also runs counter to the early histories that the Tlaxcalans themselves produced; see Gibson, *Tlaxcala*, p. 194.
99. William H. Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico* offers a notable example, discussed below. See also the serialized novella *Chalcahual*, which appeared in the *Democratic Review* alongside editorials in support of US actions during the US-Mexican War (January 1848, pp. 49–57 and February 1848, pp. 149–58).
100. See Chapter Five.
101. Cypess, *La Malinche in Mexican Literature*, p. 56.
102. Cuba was frequently referred to in US writings as an "appreciable jewel," the "pearl of the West Indies," or the "pearl of the Antilles" because of its lucrative sugar and coffee industries; see especially Charles H. Brown, *Agents of Manifest Destiny: The Life and Times of the Filibusters* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), pp. 21–146.
103. See José Martí, "Our America," in Deborah Shnoorkal and Mirta Muñoz, eds., *The José Martí Reader: Writings on the Americas* (New York: Ocean Press, 1999), p. 112. Martí invokes "the mother who raised [those born in America and who] wears an Indian apron," criticizing those who figuratively abandon or deny her. His formulation has been widely discussed and criticized; on Martí's racial politics, see Chapter Four, n. 8 for relevant scholarship.
104. Eric Wertheimer, *Imagined Empires: Incas, Aztecs, and the New World of American Literature, 1771–1876* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 208; see his discussion of Prescott more generally for its focus on the historian's ideas about hieroglyphics and the contradictions they introduce into the nationalist and racist hierarchies maintained in *History of the Conquest of Mexico* and *The Conquest of Peru* (pp. 91–132). On Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, see also John Ernest, "Reading the Romantic Past: William Hickling Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico*," *American Literary History* 5 (1993), 231–49; and Inga Clendinnen, "'Fierce and Unnatural Cruelty': Cortés and the Conquest of Mexico," *Representations* 3 (1991), pp. 65–100.
105. Preface to William Hickling Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Mexico, with a Preliminary View of the Ancient Mexican Civilization and the Life of the Conqueror, Hernándo Cortés* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1843), 3 vols., vol. 1, p. xiv; all subsequent references to Prescott's *History* will be to the

- original 1843 edition, and will be given in parentheses by volume and page number (e.g., I.xiv).
106. Cited in C. Harvey Gardiner, Introduction to William Hickling Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Mexico* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. xi (Prescott's emphasis).
 107. For a useful discussion of US appropriations of the Black Legend, see Wertheimer, *Imagined Empires*, especially pp. 19–27. See also David Shields, *Oracles of Empire: Poetry, Politics, and Commerce in British America, 1690–1750* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 175–76.
 108. Wertheimer, *Imagined Empires*, p. 13.
 109. This comes from a review entitled "Life in Mexico during a Residence of Two Years in that Country, By Madame C—de la B—," *NAR* 56.118 (January 1843), pp. 137–70 (citation from p. 137).
 110. *Ibid.*, p. 138.
 111. "The Despatches of Cortés, the Conqueror of Mexico, addressed to the Emperor Charles the Fifth . . . Now first translated into English . . . by George Folsom," *NAR* 57.121 (October 1843), p. 459.
 112. These writings are discussed at length in Chapter Five.
 113. *Ibid.*, p. 459.
 114. "William H. Prescott," *Harper's* I.1 (June 1850), pp. 138–39.
 115. "History of the Conquest of Peru, with a Preliminary View of the Civilization of the Incas, by William H. Prescott," *NAR* 65.137 (October 1847), p. 369.
 116. "William H. Prescott," *Littell's Living Age* I.1 (May 1844), p. 32.
 117. "Prescott's Conquest of Mexico," *US Democratic Review* 14.67 (February 1844), p. 190.
 118. *Ibid.*, pp. 191, 195.
 119. *Ibid.*, p. 194.
 120. *Ibid.*, p. 190. On Prescott's opposition to the war, see David Levin, *History as Romantic Art: Bancroft, Prescott, Motley, and Parkman* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), p. 151.
 121. See Robert W. Johannsen, *To the Halls of the Montezumas: The Mexican War in the American Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 245–48.
 122. "The Conquest of Mexico by Hernándo Cortez, translated by John S. C. Abbott," *Harper's* 12 (December 1855), p. 25.
 123. "Sketches of American Society by F. and T. Pulszky," *Littell's Living Age* 464 (April 1853), p. 104.

3 A FRANCOPHONE VIEW OF COMPARATIVE AMERICAN LITERATURE: *REVUE DES COLONIES* AND THE TRANSLATIONS OF ABOLITION

1. The citation is from Chapter Two n. 11.
2. See Eric Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993),

especially “San Domingo and Its Patriots,” pp. 31–35; Eugene D. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), especially Chapter One, “Slave Revolts in Hemispheric Perspective,” pp. 1–50; Simon P. Newman, “American Political Culture and the French and Haitian Revolutions: Nathaniel Cutting and the Jeffersonian Republics,” in David P. Geggus, ed., *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World* (Charleston: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), pp. 72–89; and Robert Alderson, “Charleston’s Rumored Slave Revolt of 1793,” in Geggus, *Impact of the Haitian Revolution*, pp. 93–111. On slavery in the francophone West Indies more generally, see Doris Y. Kadish, *Slavery in the Caribbean Francophone World: Distant Voices, Forgotten Acts, Forged Identities* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000).

3. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution*, p. 96.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 96–97.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
7. John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 275, citing Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968). On the emigration of free people of color from the French West Indies to the northeastern United States in particular, see Susan Branson and Leslie Patrick, “Étrangers dans un Pays Étrange: Saint-Domingan Refugees of Color in Philadelphia,” in Geggus, *Impact of the Haitian Revolution*, pp. 193–208.
8. David Walker, *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*, ed. Peter P. Hinks (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), p. 58.
9. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution*, p. 112.
10. Caryn Cossé Bell, *Revolution, Romanticism, and the Afro-Creole Protest Tradition in Louisiana 1718–1868* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), p. 91.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
12. The terms “*hommes de couleur*” and (more commonly used) “*gens de couleur*” were used to distinguish the mixed-race from the white and black classes (*blancs* and *noirs*). Both terms, “*hommes de couleur*” and “*gens de couleur*,” usually, but not always, implied membership of the “*affranchis*” (that is, free rather than slave status). At the same time, the term “*noir*” usually, but not always, implied slave status.
13. See J. Michael Dash, *Literature and Ideology in Haiti, 1915–1961* (Ottawa: Barnes and Noble Books, 1981), pp. 6–23; and Chris Bongie, *Islands and Exiles: The Creole Identities of Post/Colonial Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 266–68.
14. *Revue des Colonies* (October 1836), esp. pp. 180–81.
15. See the richly detailed discussion in Lawrence C. Jennings, “Cyrille Bisette, Radical Black French Abolitionist,” *French History* 9 (1995), pp. 48–66; see

- p. 62 on the reactions of the Conseils Généraux to the *Revue's* ardent abolitionism.
16. A few notable exceptions include Régis Antoine, *Les écrivains français et les antilles: des premiers Pères blancs aux surréalistes noirs* (Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1978), who identifies the journal as “la première revue française d’hommes de couleur”; and especially Bongie, who devotes a chapter of *Islands and Exiles* to tracing the career of the *Revue's* main editor, Cyrille Bissette, placing it alongside the careers of the white Creole writer Louis Maynard and the French abolitionist Victor Schoelcher (pp. 262–347). See also the quasi-sociological study by Shelby T. McCloy, *The Negro in the French West Indies* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966), pp. 212–13; and the rich historical picture of the *Revue's* more general context in Bell’s chapter on “Romanticism, Social Protest, and Reform,” in *Revolution, Romanticism*, pp. 89–136.
 17. *Revue des Colonies* (July 1834), p. 3.
 18. Bissette’s biography is provided in Jennings, “Cyrille Bissette,” esp. pp. 50–54; as well as the discussion in Bongie, *Islands and Exiles*, pp. 266–87.
 19. Jennings makes a powerful case for Bissette’s overlooked role in histories of the transatlantic abolition movement; see “Cyrille Bissette,” pp. 58–60.
 20. Bongie, *Islands and Exiles*, pp. 268–69.
 21. Nancy Vogeley, “Colonial Discourse in a Postcolonial Context: Nineteenth-Century Mexico,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 2 (1993), pp. 190–91. Vogeley’s particular case study in this article involves the fascinating uses of the terms “colonial” and “colonization” during the decades after Mexican independence in 1821. More generally, see this article for an overview of the varied and confusing uses of the term “colonial discourse” by contemporary literary critics and an excellent discussion of what Latin Americanists can bring to the field of colonial discourse studies traditionally presided over by British and English-speaking American literary scholars. The relationship between Latin American studies and postcolonial studies has been hotly debated over the past decade; see, for example, Patricia Seed, “Colonial and Postcolonial Discourse,” *Latin American Research Review* 26 (1991), pp. 120–33; the responses to Seed’s essay by various critics in *Latin American Research Review* 28 (1993); and, most recently, Walter Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).
 22. Bonaparte’s sister, Pauline, also spent time in the Caribbean; as the wife of General Victor Emmanuele Leclerc, she spent nearly two years in Haiti before returning as a widow to France. For a twentieth-century novelistic meditation on the Caribbean as a site of European erotic projections through this period of Pauline’s life, see Alejo Carpentier’s racy portrait in *El reino de este mundo* (Barcelona: Editorial Seix Barral S. A., 1967; first published in 1964).
 23. See Thomas Cassirer and Jean-François Brière, in the Introduction to their translation of Grégoire, *On the Cultural Achievements of Negroes* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), p. xl.

24. On the history of Grégoire's activism and strategies in publishing and promoting *De la littérature des Nègres*, see *ibid.*, pp. xxxvii–xlcvii; and Ruth Necheless, *The Abbé Grégoire 1787–1831: The Odyssey of an Egalitarian* (Westport: Greenwood, 1971).
25. Cited in Cassirer and Brière, Introduction to Grégoire, *On the Cultural Achievements of Negroes*, p. xlv.
26. Grégoire, *On the Cultural Achievements of Negroes*, p. 80. All subsequent quotations from Grégoire will come from this edition and page numbers will be given in parentheses.
27. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (New York: Library of America, 1984), p. 267.
28. Jefferson, *Notes*, p. 270.
29. On Child's borrowing from Warden, see Cassirer and Brière's Introduction to Grégoire, *On the Cultural Achievements of Negroes*, p. xlv.
30. Lydia Maria Child, *Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans* (Boston: Allen and Ticknor, 1833), Chapter 6, "The Intellect of Negroes," p. 172.
31. Child, *Appeal*, p. 172. On Ogé's abstract support of freedom for slaves, see n. 31 of Chapter 6.
32. Child, *Appeal*, Chapter 8, "Prejudices Against People of Color, and Our Duties in Relation to this Subject," p. 98. Child's abolitionism and its enormous influence among US abolitionist circles of the 1830s and 1840s have been treated at length by Carolyn Karcher, *The First Woman in the Republic: A Cultural Biography of Lydia Maria Child* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994).
33. *North American Review* 37.80 (July 1833), pp. 138–39.
34. *Revue des Colonies* (December 1834), pp. 3, 7. Bongie views this focus on "fusion" as exemplary of the journal's "(post- and anti-) revolutionary project"; see his analysis in *Islands and Exiles*, pp. 274–76.
35. Jefferson, *Notes*, p. 190.
36. Jefferson, *Notes*, p. 267.
37. Recent studies of Wheatley's international reputation include Frank Shuffleton, "On Her Own Footing: Phillis Wheatley in Freedom," in Vincent Carretta and Philip Gould, eds., *Genius in Bondage: Literature of the Early Black Atlantic* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001), pp. 175–89; and Kirsten Wilcox, "The Body into Print: Marketing Phillis Wheatley," *American Literature* 71 (1999), pp. 1–29.
38. Phillis Wheatley, *Memoir and Poems of Phillis Wheatley, A Native African and a Slave*, ed. George Light (Boston: George W. Light, 1834), p. 25. On Wheatley's appearance in US publications during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see the useful collection of "Selected Early Comments" in William H. Robinson, ed., *Critical Essays on Phillis Wheatley* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1982), pp. 17–59.
39. "Memoirs and Poems of Phillis Wheatley," *New-England Magazine* 6.4 (April 1834), p. 344.

40. Andrew D. White, "Jefferson and Slavery," *Atlantic Monthly* (January 1862), p. 34. The article judges that Jefferson's "remarks on the colored race are clear and fair."
41. *Revue des Colonies* (July 1834), p. 4.
42. Phillis Wheatley, *Poems on Various Subjects Religious and Moral* (London: A. Bell, 1773), n.p.
43. Henri Grégoire, *De la littérature des Nègres, including English language edition by D. B. Warden*, reprint of the 1808 edition published by Maradan, Paris, and of the English translation, 1810, printed by T. Kirk, Brooklyn (Nendeln, Switzerland: Kraus-Thomson, 1971), pp. 270–71.
44. *Revue des Colonies* (August 1834), p. 6.
45. On Bissette's more general use of Romantic irony to problematize colonial language, see Bongie's analysis in *Islands and Exiles*, pp. 277–79.
46. Wheatley, *Poems on Various Subjects*, n.p.
47. *Revue des Colonies* (January 1837), pp. 288–89.
48. *Revue des Colonies* (January 1837), p. 273.
49. *Revue des Colonies* (September 1835), p. 134.
50. See, respectively, *Revue des Colonies* (July 1835), p. 41; (January 1837), p. 311; and (June 1837), p. 512.
51. For a brief discussion of the literary contributions to the *Revue*, see Bongie, *Islands and Exiles*, pp. 270–71; and Bell, *Revolution, Romanticism*, pp. 96–98.
52. Cited in Dash, *Literature and Ideology*, pp. 2–3.
53. The poem is printed in *Revue des Colonies* (July 1835), pp. 46–47.
54. *Zélie* is identified here as a reprint from the *Journal des Femmes*.
55. *Revue des Colonies* (December 1835), p. 273. On the trope of the "tragic mulatto," see especially Werner Sollors's chapter in *Neither Black Nor White Yet Both: Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).
56. *Revue des Colonies* (January 1835), p. 335; on the tragic mulatto in white-authored fiction, the classic source is Sterling Brown's essay "Negro Character as Seen by White Authors," reprinted in *Callaloo* 5 (February–May 1982), pp. 55–89.
57. On the Nau brothers and repression under the Boyer regime, see Dash, *Literature and Ideology*, p. 8.
58. Nau's best-known work was *Histoire des Caciques* (1854), a history of indigenous Haiti before the age of European conquest, which registers his interest in establishing a Haitian culture independent of overweening European influence.
59. Cited in Dash, *Literature and Ideology*, p. 9.
60. The story is inaccurately titled "Idalina" in the brief mention it receives by Léon-François Hoffman, "Haitian Sensibility," in A. James Arnold, ed., *A History of Literature in the Caribbean: Hispanic and Francophone Regions* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1994), 3 vols., vol. 1, p. 373. The story appears serially in *Revue des Colonies* (July, August, and September 1836).
61. *Revue des Colonies* (September 1836), p. 128.

62. On Séjour's biography and oeuvre, see David O'Connell, "Victor Séjour: Écrivain américain de langue française," *Revue de Louisiane* 1 (1972), pp. 60–75; Charles Edwards O'Neill, *Séjour: Parisian Playwright from Louisiana* (Lafayette: Center for Louisiana Studies, University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1995), Chapter 1; and Léon-François Hoffmann, *Le nègre romantique: personnage littéraire et obsession collective* (Paris: Payot, 1973), pp. 234–35.
63. Victor Séjour, "Le Mulâtre/The Mulatto," ed. Werner Sollors, trans. Andrea Lee, in Marc Shell and Werner Sollors, ed., *The Multilingual Anthology of American Literature* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), pp. 156–57. All passages from the story are taken from this edition and Lee's facing-page English translation (which I have modified in several instances), and page numbers will be given in parentheses. See also Sollors's excellent discussion of "Le mulâtre" in the context of the Code Noir in *Neither Black Nor White Yet Both*, pp. 164–67; Sollors observes here that the story "was published at a time when English-language abolitionist fiction in the United States had not yet contributed anything resembling the force of this tale" (pp. 166–67).
64. Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 179–80.
65. Séjour, "Le Mulâtre," pp. 148–49. Going on the extensive description of landscape in the tale, David O'Connell suggests that Séjour must in fact have visited Haiti himself; see "Victor Séjour," p. 62 (cited in Bell, *Revolution, Romanticism*, p. 96 n. 14).
66. Séjour, "Le Mulâtre," pp. 150–51. Bell (*Revolution, Romanticism*, pp. 96ff.) reads the traveling narrator as white, though in fact his race is never specified; if he were, like Séjour himself, a member of the *gens de couleur libres* from Louisiana or another Caribbean site, differences of class and color could still easily account for the fact that Antoine addresses him as "Master."
67. Edgar Allan Poe, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), pp. 188, 184.
68. See John Carlos Rowe's discussion of Poe and imperialism in Chapter 3 of *Literary Culture and US Imperialism: From the Revolution to World War II* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 53–75.
69. On *Les Cenelles*, see Bell, *Revolution, Romanticism*, pp. 114–23, where she argues that in an atmosphere of extreme repression of the press, the French romantic literary movement became a vehicle of protest for free people of color in Louisiana.
70. On *L'Album*, see especially Michel Fabre, "The New Orleans Press and French-Language Literature by Creoles of Color," in *Multilingual America: Transnationalism, Ethnicity, and the Languages of American Literature*, ed. Werner Sollors (New York and London: New York University Press, 1998), pp. 29–49.
71. Paul Gilroy, *Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); and Sandra Gunning, "Nancy Prince and the Politics of Mobility, Home and Diasporic (Mis)Identification," *American*

- Quarterly* 53 (2001), pp. 32–69. See also the recent collection by Vincent Carretta and Philip Gould, eds., *Genius in Bondage: Literature of the Early Black Atlantic* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001) as well as Philip Gould, “Free Carpenter, Venture Capitalist: Reading the Lives of the Early Black Atlantic,” *American Literary History* 12 (2000), pp. 659–84.
72. Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, in *The Classic Slave Narratives*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (New York: Penguin, 1987), pp. 1–182. On Equiano in a transatlantic context, see especially Chapter Six of Srinivas Aravamudan, *Tropicopolitans* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), pp. 233–88; Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina, “Mobility in Chains: Freedom of Movement in the early Black Atlantic,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 100 (2001), pp. 41–59; Walter Johnson, “Possible Pasts: Some Speculations on Time, Temporality, and the History of Atlantic Slavery,” *Amerikastudien/American Studies* 45 (2000), pp. 485–99; and Alessandro Pertelli, “Tropes of the Talking Book: Olaudah Equiano Between Three Worlds,” *PALARA: Publication of the Afro-Latin/American Research Association* 1 (1997), pp. 55–65.
 73. Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). On Jacobs in this context, see Carolyn Vellenga Berman, “Creole Family Relations in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*,” *Novel* 35 (2000), pp. 328–52.
 74. Frederick Douglass, “The Heroic Slave,” in Julia Griffiths, ed., *Autographs for Freedom* (Cleveland: John P. Jewett and Company, 1853), p. 176. On “The Heroic Slave” in a New World context, see especially Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations*, pp. 115–24; Krista Walker, “Trappings of Nationalism in Frederick Douglass’s ‘The Heroic Slave,’” *African American Review* 34 (2000), pp. 233–47; and Maggie Montesinos Sale, *Slumbering Volcano: American Slave Ship Revolts and the Production of Rebellious Masculinity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997). On Douglass’s role in the Caribbean, see Daniel Brantley, “Black Diplomacy and Frederick Douglass’s Caribbean Experiences, 1871 and 1889–91: The Untold Story,” *Phylon: A Review of Race and Culture* 45 (1984), pp. 197–209; and, more generally, Paul Baggett, “Transcending the Boundaries of Nation: Images and Imaginings of Frederick Douglass,” *In Process: A Journal of African American and African Diaspora Literature and Culture* 2 (2000), pp. 103–13.
 75. Martin R. Delaney, *Blake, or the Huts of America*, Introduction by Floyd J. Miller (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970) p. 193. For a compelling reading of *Blake* as a novel opposed to US expansionism and the “visionary prospect of slave-holding power extended throughout the Southwest and Caribbean, even Latin America” (189), see Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations*, pp. 183–221.
 76. Delaney, *Blake*, p. 195.
 77. The articles Madden included in his 1840 translation of the autobiography include, for example, “Necessity of Separating the Irish in America from the Sin of Slavery” and “Condition of Slaves in Cuba,” which documents the case of a US woman living in Havana who allegedly murdered a Cuban slave woman in a fit of jealousy over her potential attractiveness to her own “paramour.”

- See Madden's translation and appendices in *The Life and Poems of a Cuban Slave*, ed. Edward J. Mullen (Connecticut: Archon Books, 1981), pp. 150–67 and pp. 182–92. On this translation of Manzano, see William Luis, "La Autobiografía de Juan Francisco Manzano y la tradición de Richard Robert Madden: Un texto con dos interpretaciones sobre la vida del esclavo poeta," *Discurso: revista de estudios iberoamericanos* 11 (1993), pp. 95–111; and, on Manzano in a transamerican context, Luis A. Jiménez, "Nineteenth-Century Autobiography in the Afro-Americas: Frederick Douglass and Juan Francisco Manzano," *Afro-Hispanic Review* 14 (1995), pp. 47–52.
78. William Wells Brown, *The Black Man: His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements* (New York: Thomas Hamilton, 1863), pp. 88–90.
 79. Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave, Related by Herself*, ed. Moira Ferguson (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 57–58. The transnational dimensions of Prince's text have been treated by Mario Cesareo, "When the Subaltern Travels: Slave Narrative and Testimonial Erasure in the Contact Zone," in Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert, ed., *Women at Sea: Travel Writing and the Margins of Caribbean Discourse* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 93–134; and Cheryl Fish, "Voices of Restless (Dis)continuity: The Significance of Travel for Free Black Women in the Antebellum Americas," *Women's Studies* 26 (1997), pp. 475–95.
 80. Mary Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands*, Introduction by William L. Andrews (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 1. All subsequent quotations will come from this edition, and page numbers will be given in parentheses. On Seacole in a transnational frame, see Fish, "Voices of Restless (Dis)continuity"; Ivette Romero-Cesareo, "Women Adrift: Madwomen, Matriarchs, and the Caribbean," in Paravisini-Gebert, *Women at Sea*, pp. 135–60; and Sandra Pouchet Paquet, "The Enigma of Arrival: The *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands*," *African American Review* 26 (1992), pp. 651–63.

4 CUBAN STORIES

1. José Martí, untitled essay, in Martí, *Obras completas* (Havana: Editorial Nacional de Cuba, 1963), 27 vols., vol. 5, p. 136. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from Martí's works are taken from the *Obras completas* and will be cited by volume and page number.
2. Martí, *OC*, 5.138.
3. Martí, *OC*, 9.73; *OC*, 13.226; *OC*, 23.88.
4. Martí, *OC*, 9.413.
5. Martí, *OC*, 5.135.
6. Martí, *OC*, 5.135.
7. Martí's influential formulation of "Nuestra América" appears in his essay of the same name, first published in *La Revista ilustrada de Nueva York* in 1891; see José Martí, "Our America," in Martí, *Our America: Writings on Latin America and the Struggle for Cuban Independence*, ed. Philip S. Foner, trans. Elinor Randall et al. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977). For an influential reading

of Martí's essay, as well as his place in hemispheric cultural studies, see the first chapter of José David Saldívar, *The Dialectics of Our America: Genealogy, Cultural Critique, and Literary History* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1991).

8. Elsewhere in his writings, Martí registers a more favorable opinion toward Bryant as a poet; see, for example, his brief mention of Bryant as a literary crusader for social justice in *OC* 10.94. At the same time, his reference to Bryant as a "white poet" – in implied opposition to the Latin American writers of what he famously termed "our mestizo America" – must be considered within the context of a late nineteenth-century Cuban discourse of race and nationality, which Martí played an influential role in shaping. This discourse of *mestizaje* was a shifting and ambiguous one, often promoting a racially mixed (though paradoxically raceless) Latin America, and proudly affirming an Indian cultural heritage while eliding the issue of blackness. As Susan Gillman notes of Martí's 1891 essay "Our America," "the figure of the Indian – by standing in for, and displacing, the black – stands for the new America in which 'there can be no racial animosity, because there are no races'"; see "*Ramona* in 'Our America,'" in Jeffrey Belnap and Raúl Fernández, eds., *José Martí's "Our America": From National to Hemispheric Cultural Studies* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998), p. 100. See also Ada Ferrer, who argues that "the patriotic assertions about [Cuban] racelessness [made by Martí and other nationalists] were not abstract propositions about transcending race. Rather, they were statements made in a concrete historical context of forging an anticolonial movement in a former slave society . . . There was little room here not only for black political activism but perhaps also for black subjectivity in general" (pp. 243, 229). It is important to note, then, that while Martí's thinking on race may appear utopic when opposed to late nineteenth-century Anglo-American racial ideologies, his work must also be understood within the context of a particular historical moment in Cuba. As Ferrer aptly warns, "To allow oneself to read Martí on race through the lens of contemporary [US-] American racial politics is . . . to forego the challenge of writing a postnational American Studies. It is, in fact, to bypass an obvious and potentially fruitful opportunity to internationalize American Studies and to opt instead for a more pernicious, and in some ways familiar, tendency to Americanize the international"; see "The Silence of Patriots: Race and Nationalism in Martí's Cuba," in Belnap and Fernández, ed., *José Martí's "Our America,"* p. 229.
9. William Peterfield Trent et al., eds., *The Cambridge History of American Literature* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1917), 8 vols., vol. 1, pp. 267, 266.
10. On the European orientation of Bryant's "nationalist vision of America," for example, see Lawrence Buell, "American Literary Emergence as a Postcolonial Phenomenon," in Gordon Hutner, ed., *American Literature, American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 605.
11. F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), pp. 143, vii.
12. See especially Belnap and Fernández, *Jose Martí's "Our America."*

13. Alexander Hill Everett, "The Texas Question," *US Magazine and Democratic Review* 15.75 (September 1844), p. 267.
14. Everett, "The Texas Question," p. 267; "The Present State of Cuba," *US Magazine and Democratic Review* 15.77 (November 1844), p. 478.
15. "Cuba," *US Magazine and Democratic Review* 25.135 (September 1849), p. 203.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 198.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 194.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 200.
19. Cited by Howard T. Fisher and Marion Hall Fisher in their notes to Frances Calderón de la Barca, *Life in Mexico: The Letters of Fanny Calderón de la Barca* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), p. 806.
20. Alexander Hill Everett, trans., "State of Education and Learning in Cuba," *Southern Quarterly Review* (April 1842), p. 378.
21. Everett, "State of Education," p. 394.
22. "La Havane," *Southern Quarterly Review* (January 1845), p. 154.
23. Everett, "State of Education," p. 394.
24. The citations come (in order) from "La Havane," pp. 179, 163; "Cuba," p. 200; "La Havane," pp. 193, 179, 179; "Cuba," p. 200.
25. Everett, "State of Education," p. 395.
26. Everett, "State of Education," p. 397.
27. Arnold Chapman, "William Cullen Bryant's Contribution to 'La defensa del Indio,'" in Luis Cortest, ed., *Homenaje a José Durand* (Madrid: Editorial Verbum, S. L., 1993), p. 61.
28. See the comments by William Cullen Bryant II and Thomas V. Goss in the Introduction to their edition of *The Letters of William Cullen Bryant* (1872–78), (New York: Fordham University Press, 1981), 6 vols., vol. 6, pp. 6–7.
29. The comment appears in *Letters*, vol. 6, p. 51; the *Fábulas* are translated in *The Life and Works of William Cullen Bryant*, ed. Parke Godwin (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1883–84), 6 vols., vol. 4, pp. 353–59.
30. See *Letters*, pp. 6 and 51.
31. See the discussion in Stanley T. Williams, *The Spanish Background of American Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 2 vols., vol. 2.
32. The letters from the trip are collected by Godwin under the title "A Tour in the Old South," in *The Life and Works*, vol. 6, pp. 48–49.
33. Héctor Orjuela, "Revaloración de una vieja polémica literaria: William Cullen Bryant y la oda 'Niagara' de José María Heredia," *Thesaurus: boletín del Instituto Caro y Cuervo* 19 (Bogotá, 1964), pp. 248–73 (citation from p. 248).
34. Chapman, "William Cullen Bryant's Contribution to 'La defensa del Indio,'" p. 60.
35. Kirsten Silva Gruesz, *Ambassadors of Culture: The Transamerican Origins of Latino Writing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), especially pp. 48–60.
36. See Eric Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 208;

- and Frederick Stimpson, *Cuba's Romantic Poet: The Story of Plácido*, Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures no. 47 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), pp. 134–35.
37. Orjuela, "Revaloración de una vieja polémica literaria," p. 258, citing from Bryant's correspondence. The misattribution seems to have begun with an error by William Henry Hurlbert in his 1849 essay, "The Poetry of Spanish America"; see *North American Review* 68.142 (1849), p. 140.
 38. Charles H. Brown, *William Cullen Bryant* (New York: Scribner's, 1971), pp. 155, 137. More generally, see the account of Bryant's life by his son-in-law, Parke Godwin, *A Biography of William Cullen Bryant, with extracts from his private correspondence*, 2 vols. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1883).
 39. Orjuela, "Revaloración de una vieja polémica literaria," p. 260. Orjuela notes as well that the translation of "Niágara" has been seen as the beginning of US-Latin American literary relations (p. 249). José de Onís first documented an 1849 letter from Bryant to a Cuban educator who had inquired about the rumored friendship between the poet and Heredia; Bryant wrote that he "never had any personal acquaintance with [Heredia]," and regretted that he could "give . . . no more information concerning his sojourn in this country"; see Onís, "The Alleged Acquaintance of William Cullen Bryant and José María Heredia," *Hispanic Review* 25.3 (1957), p. 219. The correspondence on Heredia appears in *Letters*, vol. 2, p. 543.
 40. Williams, *The Spanish Background of American Literature*, vol. 1, p. xxi.
 41. Williams, *The Spanish Background of American Literature*, vol. 2, pp. 129–30, p. 147.
 42. *North American Review* 68 (1849), pp. 135, 131.
 43. *The Letters of William Cullen Bryant*, ed. Cullen Bryant II and Voss, vol. 6, p. 36. Though Bryant initially opposed the US-Mexican War, he emphatically changed his position over the course of the conflict; see Bernard Weinstein, "Bryant, Annexation, and the Mexican War," *ESQ* 63 (1971), pp. 19–24, who also observes that this shift is less well-known than his initial opposition to the war.
 44. *The Life and Works*, vol. 6, p. 48.
 45. The citations come from Bryant's poems "An Indian Girl's Lament" and "The Disinterred Warrior," in *Poems of William Cullen Bryant* (New York: Thomas Y. Cromwell and Co., 1893), pp. 93, 183. For a recent analysis of Bryant's poems on Indian themes, see Carl Ostrowski, "'I Stand Upon Their Ashes in Thy Beam': The Indian Question and William Cullen Bryant's Literary Removals," *American Transcendental Quarterly* 9 (1995), pp. 299–312.
 46. *Letters*, vol. 6, p. 45.
 47. William Cullen Bryant, "A Story of the Island of Cuba," in *The Life and Works*, vol. 5, pp. 262–96 (all subsequent quotations will be given in parentheses). The story first appeared in the 1829 volume of *The Talisman*, a "gift book" to which Bryant contributed with Gulian Verplanck and Robert Sands. Godwin appears to have mistakenly dated the story from 1830 in *The Life and Works*.

48. See Brown, *William Cullen Bryant*, p. 139 (citing from Mrs. Bryant's unpublished journal); and Williams, *The Spanish Background of American Literature*, vol. 2, p. 128.
49. *The Life and Works*, vol. 5, p. 262.
50. On Bryant's collaborations with Verplanck and Sands, see Brown, *William Cullen Bryant*, pp. 164–6, 170–71, 182, 209–10, 345.
51. See "The Marriage Blunder," Bryant's story about Louisiana's "debatable ground," in *The Life and Works*, vol. 5, pp. 190–221, as well as his story "Moriscan Romances" about the *Romances Moriscos* or ancient Moorish ballads of Spain in *The Life and Works*, vol. 5, pp. 93–102.
52. See David J. Baxter, "The Dilemma of Progress: Bryant's Continental Vision," in *William Cullen Bryant and His America, Centennial Conference Proceedings 1878–1978* (New York: AMS Press, 1983), p. 19.
53. Brown, *William Cullen Bryant*, p. 164.
54. Cited in Baxter, "The Dilemma of Progress," p. 19.
55. Richard Henry Dana, Jr.'s Cuban travel narrative furnishes further evidence that by the 1850s contemporaneous Cubans understood this threat from the North in a day-to-day way; traveling across the western provinces, Dana noted that the Creoles "fear that the Anglo-Saxon race [will] swallow up the power and property of the island, as they have done in California and Texas . . ."; see Harvey Gardiner, ed., *To Cuba and Back* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1966), p. 113.
56. For discussions of the *Conspiración de la Escalera*, see Philip S. Foner, *A History of Cuba and Its Relations with the US* (New York: International, 1962), 2 vols., vol. 1, pp. 214–28; on Domingo del Monte and the allegation of his involvement in the conspiracy, see Ivan A. Schulman's Introduction to Juan Francisco Manzano's *Autobiografía de un esclavo* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996), pp. 16–30.
57. Everett, "The Texas Question," *US Magazine and Democratic Review* (September 1844), p. 267.
58. Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Cuba and the United States: Ties of Singular Intimacy*, 2nd edition (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), pp. 46–47.
59. *Letters*, vol. 3, p. 33.
60. *Letters*, vol. 3, p. 47.
61. *Letters*, vol. 3, pp. 45, 48.
62. Sundquist, *To Wake the Nations*, p. 200.
63. Martin R. Delaney, *Blake, or the Huts of America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970).
64. Cirilo Villaverde, *Cecilia Valdés*, trans. Sydney G. Gest (New York: Vantage Press, 1962), p. 13. All subsequent quotations from the novel will be from this edition and page numbers will be given in parentheses. See also the *Prólogo y Cronología* provided by Ivan A. Schulman in his edition of the original Spanish-language text, which is based on the text established by Esteban Rodríguez Herrera in his 1953 critical edition; *Cecilia Valdés o la Loma del Ángel*, ed. Ivan A. Schulman (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1981).

65. See Pamela María Smorkaloff, *Readers and Writers in Cuba: A Social History of Print Culture, 1830s–1990s* (New York: Garland, 1997), p. 6.
66. Rodrigo Lazo, “Filibustering Cuba: Cecilia Valdés and a Memory of Nation in the Americas,” *American Literature* 74 (2002), p. 2.
67. See the brief discussion of the US reception of both Manzano and Plácido in Chapter Three.
68. See especially Lazo, “Filibustering Cuba.” On *Cecilia Valdés* and Cuban nationalism, see, for example, Diana Alvarez-Amell, “Las dos caras de Cecilia Valdés: Entre el romanticismo y el nacionalismo cubano,” *Hispania* 83 (2000), pp. 1–10; Humberto López Cruz, “Cecilia Valdés: La mulatería como símbolo de identidad nacional en la sociedad colonial cubana” in *Hispanofila* 125 (1999), pp. 51–61; and Carlos M. Andrés Gil, “Antiesclavismo y independentismo en Cecilia Valdés,” *Siglo Diecinueve* 2 (1996), pp. 101–16. For a fascinating reading of the novel in a transamerican context, see Eduardo González, “American Theriomorphia: The Presence of *Mulatez* in Cirilo Villaverde and Beyond,” in Gustavo Pérez Firmat, ed., *Do the Americas Have a Common Literature?* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), pp. 177–97. See also Doris Sommer’s convincing reading of the novel’s naïve narrator in *Proceed With Caution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).
69. Pérez, *Cuba and the United States*, pp. 42–3.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
73. Villaverde, *Autobiografías*, in *Letras: Cultura en Cuba*, ed. Ana Cairo (Havana: Pueblo y Educación, 1987), 8 vols., vol. 4, pp. 5–6; cited in Smorkaloff, *Readers and Writers in Cuba*, p. 2.
74. Sophie Andioc Torres, ed., *La correspondance entre Domingo del Monte et Alexander Hill Everett* (Paris: Editions L’Harmattan, 1994). All subsequent quotations from the letters will be from this edition and in my translation, and page numbers will be given in parentheses.
75. Pérez, *Cuba and the United States*, p. 41.
76. Antonio Benítez Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, trans. James Maraniss (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992).
77. See *Bibliografía Cubana del Siglo XIX*, ed. Carlos M. Trelles (Vaduz: Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1965), 8 vols., vol. 2, p. 174.
78. The original and an English translation both appear in Edward J. Mullen’s edition of Madden’s translation of Manzano, *The Life and Poems of a Cuban Slave* (Connecticut: Archon Books, 1981), pp. 217 and 115.
79. For Madden’s translation and the included appendices, see Mullen’s edition cited above. On the background of the commissioning and transmission of the narrative, see Ivan A. Schulman’s Introduction to *Autobiography of a Slave*, as well as Sylvia Molloy’s excellent article, “From Serf to Self: The Autobiography of Juan Francisco Manzano,” *Modern Language Notes* 104 (1989), pp. 393–417.
80. Antonio Benítez Rojo, “Power/Sugar/Literature: Towards a Reinterpretation of Cubanness,” *Cuban Studies* 16 (1986), p. 2; see also Adriana Méndez Rodenas,

Gender and Nationalism in Colonial Cuba: The Travels of Santa Cruz y Montalvo, Condesa de Merlin (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1998), p. 73.

81. On this literary milieu, see Méndez Rodenas, *Gender and Nationalism*, pp. 36–37, 72–73.
82. Cited in Méndez Rodenas, *Gender and Nationalism*, p. 73.
83. On Francisco de Arango y Parreño, see Lorna Valerie Williams, *The Representation of Slavery in Cuban Fiction* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1994), p. 16.
84. Cited in Méndez Rodenas, *Gender and Nationalism*, pp. 7, 63. On Merlin as Arango's literary descendant, see Méndez's excellent reading of Merlin's work as a radical rewriting of Villaverde, Palma, and Betancourt.
85. Everett, "Texas Question," pp. 259, 260.
86. *Ibid.*, p. 267.
87. Everett, "Contemporary Spanish Poetry," *US Magazine and Democratic Review* 14.70 (April 1844), p. 408.
88. On the role of O'Sullivan and the *US Magazine and Democratic Review* in the promotion of literary nationalism and manifest destiny, see Priscilla Wald, *Constituting Americans: Cultural Anxiety and Narrative Form* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), esp. pp. 106–26.
89. Everett, "Present State of Cuba," p. 475.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 478.
91. On del Monte's background and his positions on race and slavery, see Schulman's Introduction to *Autobiography of a Slave*, pp. 5–30; on del Monte in a transamerican context, see A. Owen Aldridge, "An Early Cuban Exponent of Inter-American Cultural Relations: Domingo del Monte," *Hispania* 54 (1971), pp. 348–53.
92. Cited in Sophie Andioc Torres, Introduction to *La correspondance entre Domingo del Monte et Alexander Hill Everett*, p. 13.
93. Plácido's visits with the del Monte *tertulia* are discussed in William Luis, *Literary Bondage: Slavery in Cuban Narrative* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), p. 16.
94. Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda [y Arteaga], *Sab and Autobiography*, ed. and trans. Nina M. Scott (Austin: University of Texas, 1993); all subsequent quotations will be from this translation or, as noted, to the Spanish critical edition by Mary Cruz (Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1983), and page numbers will be given in parentheses.
95. The role of gender in *Sab* has received considerable critical attention; see, among many examples, Cesar Valverde, "Masculinidad y nación en la narrativa decimonónica: El caso de *Sab y Aves sin nido*," *Torre de Papel* 8 (1998), pp. 39–72; Susan Kirkpatrick, "Gómez de Avellaneda's *Sab*: Gendering the Liberal Romantic Subject," in Noel Valis and Carol Maier, eds., *In the Feminine Mode: Essays on Hispanic Women Writers* (Lewisberg: Bucknell University Press, 1990), pp. 115–30; Lucía Guerra, "Estrategias femeninas en la elaboración del sujeto romántico en la obra de Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda," *Revista iberoamericana* 51 (1985), pp. 707–22; and José A. Mahieu, "Abolicionismo

- y feminismo en la Avellaneda: Lo negro como artificio narrativo en *Sab*,” *Cuadernos hispanoamericanos: revista mensual de Cultura Hispánica* 342 (1978), pp. 613–26.
96. See Doris Sommer, “Sab C’est Moi,” *Genders* 2 (1988), p. 119; cited in Nina M. Scott, Introduction, *Sab*, xxiii.
97. On the novel’s employment of the discourse of sentimentalism, see Jerome Branche, “Ennobling Savagery? Sentimentalism and the Subaltern in *Sab*,” *Afro-Hispanic Review* 17 (1998), pp. 12–23.
98. For a different reading of this figure, see Sommer’s convincing analysis of Otway’s status as an “Englishman” in the context of Cuban-English relations of the 1830s and 1840s, as well as her groundbreaking interpretation of the novel’s vision of national consolidation still deferred in “Sab C’est Moi,” pp. 111–26; and in *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

5 HAWTHORNE’S MEXICAN GENEALOGIES

1. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Mosses from an Old Manse*, Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, ed. William Charvat et al. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1974), 23 vols., vol. 10, p. 91. All subsequent quotations will be given in parentheses.
2. Hawthorne, *American Notebooks*, Centenary Edition vol. 7, p. 44. All subsequent quotations will be given in parentheses.
3. Robert Gale, *A Nathaniel Hawthorne Encyclopedia* (New York: Greenwood, 1991), p. 22.
4. Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun*, Centenary Edition vol. 4, p. 23.
5. For a detailed account of some of Hawthorne’s sources in “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” see Carol Bensick, “World Lit Hawthorne: Re-allegorizing ‘Rappaccini’s Daughter,’” in Millicent Bell, ed., *New Essays on Hawthorne’s Major Tales* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 72–79; see also Gale’s entry on the tale in *A Nathaniel Hawthorne Encyclopedia*.
6. Hawthorne, *Miscellaneous Prose and Verse*, Centenary Edition vol. 23, p. 67. The sixteenth-century setting of “Rappaccini’s Daughter” has been clearly established by Bensick in *La Nouvelle Beatrice: Renaissance and Romance in “Rappaccini’s Daughter”* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1985), the definitive study of the tale to date.
7. On these aspects of Hawthorne’s wider familial history and career and how they shaped his sense of himself as an author, see Teresa Goddu, “Letters Turned to Gold: Hawthorne, Authorship, and Slavery,” *Studies in American Fiction* 29 (2001), pp. 49–76.
8. Hawthorne, “Sketches from Memory,” in *Mosses from an Old Manse*, pp. 428–29.
9. Hawthorne, *The Letters*, Centenary Edition vol. 15, p. 241. Hawthorne is referring here to an account that he purported not to have time to work on, though

he did effectively write about both Texas and Mexico in his 1852 campaign biography of Franklin Pierce.

10. Hawthorne, "P's Correspondence," *US Magazine and Democratic Review* 16.82 (April 1845), p. 345.
11. Hawthorne, *Miscellaneous Prose*, p. 67. The image of Hutchinson's stolen infant concludes Hawthorne's polemic against the rise of women writers.
12. On Hawthorne's wider literary relation to the Americas, see Eduardo González, "American Theriomorpha: The Presence of *Mulatz* in Cirilo Villaverde and Beyond," in Gustavo Pérez Firmat, ed., *Do the Americas Have a Common Literature?* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), pp. 177–97; Lois Parkinson Zamora, "'A Garden Inclosed': Fuentes' *Aura*, Hawthorne's and Paz's 'Rappaccini's Daughter,' and Uyeda's *Ugetsu Monogatari*," *Revista canadiense de estudios hispánicos* 8 (1984), pp. 321–34; and Bruce Simon, "Hybridity in the Americas: Reading Conde, Mukherjee, and Hawthorne," in Amritjit Singh, ed., *Post-colonial Theory and the United States: Race, Ethnicity, and Literature* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2000), pp. 412–43.
13. William Hickling Prescott, preface to Frances Calderón de la Barca, *Life in Mexico: The Letters of Fanny Calderón de la Barca*, ed. Howard T. Fisher and Marion Hall Fisher (New York: Doubleday, 1966), p. xxxvi.
14. Quoted by Fisher and Fisher in their notes to Calderón de la Barca, *Life in Mexico*, p. 630. For many details of Calderón's life and the reception of her work, I am indebted to Fisher and Fisher, who edited and annotated the recompiled version of *Life in Mexico*.
15. Though 1843 was the official publication date of *Life in Mexico*, the book in fact circulated in the United States during 1842; see Calderón, *Life in Mexico*, p. 629.
16. Hawthorne, *American Notebooks*, Centenary Edition vol. 7, p. 238.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
18. Calderón, *Life in Mexico*, p. 621 (emphasis in the original). All subsequent quotations from Calderón will be given in parentheses.
19. Fisher and Fisher, notes to Calderón, *Life in Mexico*, p. 668.
20. Paquette, *Sugar Is Made with Blood: The Conspiracy of La Escalera and the Conflict between Empires over Slavery in Cuba* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), pp. 40–41; 112–13.
21. For further treatment of slavery and racial ideologies in nineteenth-century Cuba, see Chapter Four as well as Hugh Thomas, *Cuba: The Pursuit of Freedom* (New York: Harper, 1971), pp. 156–89, 200–6, and 281–92; Philip S. Foner, *A History of Cuba and Its Relations with the US* (New York: International, 1962), 2 vols., vol. 1, pp. 46–58, 184–228; and Geoff Simons, *Cuba: From Conquistador to Castro* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), pp. 96–127.
22. Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 133.
23. Hawthorne, "Rappaccini's Daughter," p. 117. Hawthorne's source for the Alexander legend itself was Sir Thomas Browne's *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (1646), which he also cites in his *American Notebooks*.

24. Harriet Ritvo, "Barring the Cross: Miscegenation and Purity in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain," in Diana Fuss, ed., *Human, All Too Human* (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 45, 52.
25. Hawthorne, "Rappaccini's Daughter," p. 97.
26. Young, *Colonial Desire*, p. 9.
27. Hawthorne, "Rappaccini's Daughter," p. 190. See Richard Clarke Sterne, "A Mexican Flower in Rappaccini's Garden: Madame Calderón de la Barca's *Life in Mexico* Revisited," *Nathaniel Hawthorne Journal* 4 (1974), pp. 277–79, for a brief discussion of Hawthorne's use of Calderón's description of this plant.
28. From Thomas Woodson's Introduction to Hawthorne, *Letters*, Centenary Edition vol. 15, p. 53.
29. "The Yucatan Ruins," *US Magazine and Democratic Review* 12.59 (May 1843), pp. 491–92.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 492. The debate is first registered in October 1837: "Mexican Antiquities of Palenque and Mitlan, in the Provinces of Chiapa and Oaxaca," *US Magazine and Democratic Review* 1.1 (October 1837), pp. 37–47.
31. "Rambles in Yucatan," *US Magazine and Democratic Review* 11.53 (November 1842), p. 530. On John L. Stephens's representations of Yucatán, see especially Bruce A. Harvey, *American Geographics: US National Narratives and the Representation of the Non-European World, 1830–65* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 156–92.
32. "The Yucatan Ruins," pp. 492, 494.
33. "Origins and Characteristics of the American Aborigines," *US Magazine and Democratic Review* 11.54 (December 1842), p. 613.
34. "Do the Various Races of Man Constitute a Single Species?" *US Magazine and Democratic Review* 11.50 (August 1842), p. 135.
35. "Rambles in Yucatan," p. 535.
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*, p. 534.
38. "The Yucatan Ruins," p. 491.
39. "Origins and Characteristics," pp. 610, 612.
40. "Rambles in Yucatan," p. 535.
41. "The Yucatan Ruins," p. 491.
42. Stephens, vol. 1., pp. 253–54.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
44. *Ibid.*
45. Stephens, vol. 2, p. 27.
46. *Ibid.*, pp. 27–28.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 107, 253.
48. See "The Yucatan Ruins," p. 500.
49. Hawthorne, "The Birth-mark," in *Mosses from an Old Manse*, p. 39.
50. Quoted in Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 215 (my emphasis). On the rise of racial antipathy to Mexico in the United States, see pp. 208–48.

51. Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*, pp. 208–10.
52. “The Mexican Question,” *US Magazine and Democratic Review* 16.83 (May 1845), p. 427.
53. Walker, “The Texas Question,” *US Magazine and Democratic Review* 14.70 (April 1844), p. 427.
54. Walker, “The Texas Question,” p. 425.
55. Walker, “The Texas Question,” p. 426.
56. The citation is from p. 250 of Alexander Everett’s September 1844 letter to the *US Magazine and Democratic Review* (in which, as we saw in Chapter Four, he also cited without acknowledgment from the letters of his Cuban correspondent, Domingo del Monte).
57. Hawthorne, “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” p. 93.
58. Cited and discussed in Thomas Woodson’s Introduction to Hawthorne, *The Letters*, p. 54.
59. On O’Sullivan’s background, see Woodson’s discussion in Hawthorne, *The Letters*, pp. 52–59, as well as Charles H. Brown, *Agents of Manifest Destiny: The Lives and Times of the Filibusters* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), pp. 24–30. A useful discussion of the Mexican government during this period and general background on the US-Mexican War appears in Michael C. Meyer and William L. Sherman, *The Course of Mexican History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 313–70.
60. For a more detailed account of the Mexican reception of *Life in Mexico*, see the remarks by Fisher and Fisher in Calderón, *Life in Mexico*, pp. 633–36 (citation from p. 633).
61. *Diario del Gobierno de la República Mexicana*, May 12, 1843 (my translation).
62. *Diario*, June 20, 1843.
63. *Ibid.*
64. See Chapter Four.
65. On the Escalera, see Chapter Four of this book as well as Foner, *A History of Cuba*, pp. 214–28, and especially Robert Paquette, *Sugar Is Made with Blood*.
66. Quoted by Fisher and Fisher in their notes to Calderón, *Life in Mexico*, pp. 805–6.
67. See Hyatt Waggoner, “A Hawthorne Discovery: The Lost Notebook, 1835–1841,” *New England Quarterly* 49 (1976), pp. 618–26.
68. Claire Badaracco, “The Night-Blooming Cereus: A Letter from the ‘Cuba Journal,’ 1833–35, of Sophia Peabody Hawthorne, with a Check List of Her Autograph Materials in American Institutions,” *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities* 81 (1978), pp. 56–73. The citation is from p. 60.
69. Hawthorne, *Miscellaneous Prose*, pp. 350–52.
70. See Nina Gerassi-Navarro, *Pirate Novels: Fictions of Nation Building in Spanish America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), esp. pp. 141–46; and John Chuchiak, “Intellectuals, Indians and the Press: The Politicization of Justo Sierra O’Reilly’s Journalism and Views on the Maya while in the United States,” in Ingrid E. Fey and Karen Racine, eds. *Strange Pilgrimages: Exile, Travel, and National Identity in Latin America, 1800–1990*

- (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 2000); and *Justo Sierra O'Reilly*, Cuadernos de Yucatán, vol. v (A. C. Mérida, Yucatán, Mexico: Consejo Editorial de Yucatán, 1988).
71. See the discussion of El Museo Yucateco in Chuchiak, "Intellectuals, Indians, and the Press," p. 60.
 72. Ermilo Abreu Gómez, "Sierra O'Reilly y la novela," in *Justo Sierra O'Reilly*, p. 47.
 73. For a discussion of Sierra O'Reilly's relation to some of these historical sources, see Gerassi-Navarro, *Pirate Novels*, pp. 141–44.
 74. Justo Sierra O'Reilly, *El filibustero: Leyenda del Siglo XVII* (A. C. Mérida, Yucatán, México: Impresora Popular, 1940), p. 5. All subsequent quotations will be given in parentheses. All translations are my own.
 75. Victor Hugo, *Hans of Iceland* (Boston: Colonial Press, 1900), p. 198.
 76. Héctor Pérez Martínez, "prólogo," Justo Sierra O'Reilly, *Diario de nuestro viaje a los Estados Unidos* (Mexico: Antigua Librería Robredo, 1938), p. xliii.
 77. Justo Sierra Méndez, "Don Justo Sierra O'Reilly," in *Justo Sierra O'Reilly*, p. II.
 78. On the Caste War generally, see Nelson A. Reed, *The Caste War of Yucatán* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); Don E. Dumond, *The Machete and the Cross: Campesino Rebellion in Yucatan* (Lincoln: University Press of Nebraska, 1997); and Terry Rugeley, *Yucatan's Maya Peasantry and the Origins of the Caste War* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996).
 79. Chuchiak, "Intellectuals, Indians, and the Press."
 80. On Sierra O'Reilly's visit to meet Prescott, see Carlos J. Sierra, "Justo Sierra O'Reilly y William Prescott," in *Justo Sierra O'Reilly*, pp. 61–65.
 81. On the background of the Texas conflict, see, for example, Meyer and Sherman, *The Course of Mexican History*, pp. 323–41.
 82. Sierra O'Reilly, *Diario de nuestro viaje*, p. 30.
 83. Cited in Chuchiak, "Intellectuals, Indians, and the Press," p. 66.
 84. See Martínez, prologue to Sierra O'Reilly, *Diario de nuestro viaje*, p. xlvi.
 85. See Sierra O'Reilly, *Diario de nuestro viaje*, pp. 12, 13, 26–27, 31–32, 36–38, 40–42.
 86. Even Commodore Perry, who had given Sierra his initial letter of introduction to Washington, published letters in US newspapers that denigrated Yucatán and discouraged US aid to the region; see Sierra O'Reilly, *Diario de nuestro viaje*, p. 29. Sierra's discussion of this conversation with Polk is recorded on p. 38; on Buchanan's relationship with Sierra, see Chuchiak, "Intellectuals, Indians, and the Press," pp. 63–64.
 87. Sierra O'Reilly, *Diario de nuestro viaje*, p. 22.
 88. *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 37.
 89. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
 90. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
 91. *New Era*, May 4, 1848; cited in Chuchiak, "Intellectuals, Indians, and the Press," p. 65.

92. See the Appendix, document 33 (an article from *La Patria* responding to the *Daily Delta*), in Sierra O'Reilly, *Diario de nuestro viaje*, p. 110.
93. Sierra O'Reilly, *Diario de nuestro viaje*, p. 41.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
95. Stephens's travel writings from Central America are treated at length in Bruce A. Harvey, *American Geographics: US National Narratives and the Representation of the Non-European World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 150–92.
96. Martin R. Delaney, *Blake, or the Huts of America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), p. 245.
97. For the following account of Paz's literary development, I have relied in particular on two studies by Jason Wilson: *Octavio Paz* (Boston: Twayne, 1986); and *Octavio Paz: A Study of His Poetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). On Paz and surrealism, see especially *Octavio Paz: A Study*, pp. 8–33, and *Octavio Paz*, pp. 27–106.
98. The citations come, respectively, from Wilson, *Octavio Paz: A Study*, p. 19, and *Octavio Paz*, p. 3.
99. Cited in Wilson, *Octavio Paz: A Study*, p. 19.
100. Octavio Paz, *La hija de Rappaccini* (Mexico City: Era, 1990), p. 16. Translations from this text are my own.
101. Hawthorne, "Rappaccini's Daughter," p. 92. As the following pages will make clear, there are of course important differences between the two works, most obviously those of genre: while Hawthorne's story is prefaced by a narrator who comments self-reflexively on the reception of Aubépine's writing and its "unfortunate" literary place between the "Transcendentalists" and the "pen-and-ink men who address the intellect and sympathies of the multitude" (91), Paz's play opens with the words of a character called "el Mensajero," "the messenger," who speaks directly to the audience and reappears intermittently throughout the play to interpret its scenes. For an excellent consideration of the differences between the main characters in each text, see Zamora, who argues, in "A Garden Inclosed," that Paz's figures often show more poetic insight than their sometimes less than admirable counterparts in Hawthorne, and that Paz's play may be a "mediating work" between "Rappaccini's Daughter" and *Aura* by Carlos Fuentes (who, Zamora observes, wrote the program notes for the 1956 production of Paz's play). Other recent treatments of *La hija de Rappaccini* include Nedda G. de Anhalt, "Amor: Occidente y Oriente: Apuntes para un estudio comparativo sobre la hija de Rappaccini de Hawthorne y Paz," *La palabra y el hombre: Revista de la Universidad Veracruzana* 79 (1991), pp. 276–90; Alberto Blasi, "Artificio e intencionalidad de 'La hija de Rappaccini,'" *Cuadernos hispanoamericanos* 343–45 (1979), pp. 525–32; and Wilson, *Octavio Paz*, pp. 89–90.
102. Octavio Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, trans. Lysander Kemp, Yara Milos, and Rachel Phillips Belash (New York: Grove, 1985), pp. 209, 212. These particular quotations are taken from the chapter entitled "The Dialectic of

- Solitude,” which Paz appended to the collection for the second edition in 1959.
103. See the back cover of the Biblioteca Era edition, where Paz also notes that Browne’s own source for the Alexander legend in *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* was originally an Indian tale. For an intriguing reading of *La hija de Rappaccini* that suggests Paz’s incorporation of Buddhist thought as a response to Hawthorne’s Christian “dualism,” see Sterne, “Hawthorne Transformed.”
 104. Paz, *La hija de Rappaccini*; cited from the back cover of the Biblioteca Era edition.
 105. Sandra Messinger Cypess, *La Malinche in Mexican Literature: From History to Myth*, Texas Pan American Series (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), p. 94; Adelaida R. Del Castillo, “Malintzín Tenépal: A Preliminary Look into a New Perspective,” in Rosaura Sánchez and Rosa Martínez Cruz, eds., *Essays on La Mujer* (Los Angeles: Chicano Studies Center, 1977), p. 143.
 106. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1987), p. 22.
 107. Paz, *Labyrinth of Solitude*, p. 86.
 108. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*, p. 22. For further discussions of La Malinche as well as critiques of Paz’s commentary on this figure, see Emma Pérez, “‘El Chingón’: Octavio Paz and the Oedipal-Conquest Complex,” in Adela de la Torre and Beatriz M. Pesquera, eds., *Building with Our Hands: New Directions in Chicana Studies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 61–63; Norma Alarcón, “Chicana’s Feminist Literature: A Re-vision through Malintzin/or Malintzin: Putting Flesh Back on the Object,” in Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (Watertown: Persephone, 1981), pp. 182–90; Juana Armanda Alegría, *Psicología de las mexicanas* (Mexico City: Samo, 1975); Cordelia Candelaria, “La Malinche: Feminist Prototype,” *Frontiers* 5 (1980), pp. 1–6; Alfredo Mirandé and Evangelina Enríquez, *La Chicana: The Mexican-American Woman* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); Cherríe Moraga, *Loving in the War Years: Lo que nunca pasó por sus labios* (Boston: South End, 1983); and Rachel Phillips, “Marina/Malinche: Masks and Shadows,” in Beth Miller, ed., *Women in Hispanic Literature: Icons and Fallen Idols* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 97–114.
 109. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*, pp. 28–29.

6 TRANSAMERICAN THEATRE: PIERRE FAUBERT AND L’ONCLE TOM

1. “The Amazons of South America,” *Putnam’s Monthly Magazine* 6.33 (September 1855), pp. 252–62.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 259.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 258.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 259.

5. Ibid., p. 258. On the Amazon myth as it was brought to bear on Mexico and South America, see Irving Leonard, *Books of the Brave: Being an Account of Books and of Men in the Spanish Conquest and Settlement of the Sixteenth-Century New World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 36–64; see also Nancy Vogeley's discussion of Amazons in "How Chivalry Formed the Myth of California," *Modern Language Quarterly* 62 (2001), pp. 172–74; and Alison Tauber's "The Only Good Amazon is a Converted Amazon: The Woman Warrior and Christianity in the Amadís Cycle," in Jean R. Brink, Maryanne C. Horowitz, and Allison P. Coudert, eds., *Playing With Gender: A Renaissance Pursuit* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), pp. 35–51.
6. Ibid., p. 261.
7. For Anzaldúa's genealogy, see Chapter Four.
8. "Hayti and the Haitians," *Putnam's* 3.13 (January 1854), pp. 54–55.
9. Ibid., p. 56.
10. Ibid., p. 61.
11. Ibid., p. 60.
12. Ibid., p. 59.
13. Ibid., pp. 60–62.
14. "Soulouquerie in Boston," *United States Democratic Review* 31.170 (August 1852), p. 111; "Uncle Tom at Home," *Putnam's* 8.43 (July 1856), p. 9.
15. "On the rumored occupation of San Domingo by the Emperor of France," *United States Democratic Review* 32.2 (February 1853), p. 73; "Hayti and the Dominican Republic," *American Whig Review* 14.80 (August 1851), p. 145.
16. "Soulouque and the Dominicans," *United States Democratic Review* 30.164 (February 1852), p. 148.
17. "Soulouque and the Dominicans," p. 137; "Hayti and the Dominican Republic," p. 145.
18. "Hayti and the Dominican Republic," p. 156.
19. "Soulouquerie in Boston," p. 111.
20. "Soulouque and the Dominicans," p. 138.
21. Ibid., p. 144.
22. Ludwell Lee Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1966), p. 58.
23. "Hayti and the Dominican Republic," p. 160.
24. "On the rumored occupation of San Domingo," p. 180.
25. "Hayti and the Dominican Republic," pp. 158, 156.
26. See Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), pp. 73, 82–3. Recent analyses of the Haitian Revolution also include Carolyn E. Fick, "Dilemmas of Emancipation: from the Saint Domingue Insurrections of 1791 to the Emerging Haitian State," *History Workshop Journal* 46 (1998), pp. 1–15, and *The Making of Haiti: The Saint Domingue Revolution from Below* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990); as well as the chapter entitled "The Historical Legacy," in Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Haiti, State Against Nation: The Origins and Legacy of Duvalierism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990).

27. Pierre Faubert, *Ogé, ou, Le préjugé de couleur, drame historique suivi de poésies fugitives et de notes* (Paris: C. Mailet-Schmitz, 1856), p. 37. All subsequent quotations from *Ogé* will be given in parentheses. The play has never been translated into English; all translations in this chapter are my own.
28. The French colonial terminology for describing free persons of African descent included both the phrase “*gens de couleur libres*” and the word “*affranchis*,” both of which usually, but not always, implied the racial status of *mulâtre*; correspondingly, most but not all Saint-Dominguean slaves were *noirs*, and largely, by the year of Ogé’s uprising, African-born (see Fick, *The Making of Haiti*, p. 279). On the politics of color and class in Haitian history, see also Trouillot, *Haiti, State Against Nation*, pp. 109–36.
29. See the discussion in C. L. R. James, *Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), pp. 75–76. Ogé is also represented briefly but significantly as the subject of a portrait in Victor Hugo’s 1832 novel *Bug-Jargal*; see Chris Bongie’s discussion of both the portrait and the novel in *Islands and Exiles: The Creole Identities of Post/Colonial Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 242–43.
30. Victor Schoelcher, *Colonies étrangères et Haiti* (Paris: Pagnerre, 1843), p. 13.
31. On the Boyer administration, see Montague, *Haiti and the United States*, pp. 16–23, 50–56, 70–2, 279; on the *noiriste* fight against Boyer, see Trouillot, *Haiti, State Against Nation*, p. 126.
32. Ogé did, however, speak explicitly in favor of freedom for Saint Domingue’s slaves as an abstract principle. See Bongie’s citation from Ogé’s speech before the Massac Club in *Islands and Exiles*, p. 482. Identifying Ogé as an icon of mulatto elitism, Léon-François Hoffmann notes that each new mulatto presidency in Haiti witnessed a resurgence of Ogé’s popularity as a historical figure, celebrated as a national hero intermittently through the first part of the twentieth century; see Hoffmann, “Haitian Sensibility,” in A. James Arnold, ed., *A History of Literature in the Caribbean: Hispanic and Francophone Regions* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1994), 3 vols., vol. 1, p. 368. For other accounts of Ogé’s racial politics and the 1790 revolt, see also Hoffmann, *Haiti: lettres et l’être* (Toronto: Editions du GREF, 1992), pp. 277–80; Fick, *The Making of Haiti* pp. 82–84, 130–31; Trouillot, *Haiti, State Against Nation*, pp. 126–27; James, *Black Jacobins*, pp. 68–76; and Aimé Césaire, *Toussaint Louverture: La révolution française et le problème colonial* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1961), pp. 90–103. As a literary figure, Ogé appears as well in the 1854 poem “Vincent Ogé” by the African American writer George Boyer Vashon (1824–78), and briefly (as the brother of the doctor called Ogé) in the 1962 Cuban novel *El siglo de las luces*, by Alejo Carpentier. For a fascinating essay on this novel and the integral presence of Afro-American cultures in the “larger process of American culture and . . . American writing,” see Roberto González Echevarría’s chapter, “Socrates Among the Weeds: Blacks and History in Carpentier’s *El siglo de las luces*,” in Echevarría, *Celestina’s Brood: Continuities*

- of the Baroque in Spanish and Latin American Literatures (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), pp. 170–93. On Ogé's understanding of the garden in this novel, González Echevarría notes that "the whole garden can be taken as an emblem of the mixture of European philosophy with Afro-American beliefs" (p. 176). Carpentier's own words here uncannily evoke the mystery of Rappaccini's garden in Hawthorne's story: "Every human being had a 'double' in the vegetable kingdom, and there were cases where this 'double' to further its own growth, stole strength from the man with whom it was linked, condemning him to illness while it flowered or germinated" (cited in *Celestina's Brood*, p. 176).
33. These quotations from US officials are cited from Robert Debs Heinl, Jr. and Nancy Gorden Heinl, *Written in Blood: The Story of the Haitian People, 1492–1971* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978), pp. 193, 199. Michael Dash provides a trenchant critique of the Heinls' lurid rhetoric and "deep belief in the deviant nature of Haitian society" in *Haiti and the United States: National Stereotypes and the Literary Imagination*, 2nd edition (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), pp. 112–14.
 34. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, p. 105.
 35. See, respectively, David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence in Haiti* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 11; and Bongie, *Islands and Exiles*, p. 284.
 36. Césaire, *Toussaint Louverture*, p. 90.
 37. See Trouillot, *Haiti, State Against Nation*, p. 126.
 38. Ogé, p. 25. Faubert was obviously concerned enough about Ogé's historical advocacy of the *mulâtre élite* at the expense of the *noir* masses to include a counternarrative recuperating the revolutionary as an avowed opponent of color prejudice despite evidence to the contrary. The historians to whom he ascribes "the most impartiality" on the subject are probably Thomas Madiou and Beaubrun Ardouin, the nineteenth-century Haitian writers who inaugurated what Trouillot calls the "epic tradition" of Haitian historiography, a tradition that responded to racist denigration from the world while serving distinct political agendas in nineteenth-century Haiti. Writing his *Histoire d'Haïti* (1848) at the height of *mulâtre-noir* tensions, for example, Madiou asserted that the leaders of the 1791 uprising that succeeded Ogé's failed 1790 rebellion proclaimed vengeance on behalf of the *mulâtre* leader Ogé during a voodoo ceremony celebrating their victory.
 39. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, pp. 71–72.
 40. Lois Parkinson Zamora, "The Usable Past: The Idea of History in Modern US and Latin American Fiction," in Gustavo Pérez Firmat, ed., *Do the Americas Have a Common Literature?* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), p. 37.
 41. Gustave de Beaumont, *Marie or Slavery in the United States*, trans. Barbara Chapman (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958). The earliest of these scenes occurs in Beaumont's foreword, which describes his first experience attending a theater in the United States (pp. 4–5); the later scene occurs in Chapter 10 (pp. 86–91).

42. Carolyn Porter, “‘What We Know That We Don’t Know’: Remapping American Literary Studies,” *American Literary History* 6 (1994), pp. 466–526.
43. The first French edition was published as Marie Fontenay de Grandfort, *L’autre monde* (Paris: Lacroix-Comon, 1855).
44. From an unnumbered page of the translator’s and publisher’s notice to Marie de Fontenay Grandfort, *The New World*, trans. Edward Clifton Wharton (New Orleans: Sherman, Wharton, 1855). On the nineteenth-century New Orleans Press and race, see Michel Fabre, “The New Orleans Press and French-Language Literature by Creoles of Color,” in Werner Sollors, ed., *Multilingual America: Transnationalism, Ethnicity, and the Languages of American Literature* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1998), pp. 29–49.
45. See Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).
46. Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Co., 1994), pp. 126–27. All subsequent quotations from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* will be from this edition and page numbers will be given in parentheses.
47. Hortense J. Spillers, “Changing the Letter: The Yokes, the Jokes of Discourse, or, Mrs. Stowe, Mr. Reed,” in Deborah McDowell and Arnold Rampersad, eds., *Slavery and the Literary Imagination* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), p. 32.
48. Dash’s *Haiti and the United States* provides a short discussion of this passage from Stowe as well as an in-depth analysis of the sexual polarization of race structuring the US’s projection of “its fantasies and insecurities” onto Haiti, from the nineteenth century through the contemporary period (p. 2).
49. See Montague, *Haiti and the United States*, p. 35.
50. Trouillot, *Haiti, State Against Nation*, p. 119.
51. Montague, *Haiti and the United States*, p. 51.
52. Cited in *ibid.*
53. This phenomenon might be seen as a more culturally and geographically specific instantiation of what Toni Morrison has famously called “the Africanist presence” in US literature; see Morrison, “Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature,” *Michigan Quarterly Review* 28 (1989), pp. 1–34.
54. Susan Gillman, “*Ramona* in ‘Our America,’” in Jeffrey Belnap and Raúl Fernández, eds., *José Martí’s “Our America”: From National to Hemispheric Cultural Studies* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998), pp. 106–7.
55. Herman Melville, *Pierre or The Ambiguities*, ed. Harrison Hayford et al. (Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University Press/Newberry Library, 1971), p. 112. All subsequent quotations will be given in parentheses.
56. Eduardo González, “American Theriomorphism: The Presence of *Mulatz* in Cirilo Villaverde and Beyond,” in Pérez Firmat, *Do the Americas Have a Common Literature?*, p. 185.

57. *Pierre*, p. 131. On the term “amalgamation” and the vocabulary of nineteenth-century literature of race more generally, see James Kinney, *Amalgamation! Race, Sex, and Rhetoric in the Nineteenth-Century American Novel* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985). See also C. L. R. James’s compelling reading of Isabel as both a literary descendant of Tashtego and the product of a mixture, “half-Glendinning and half-immigrant,” and thus “the only means by which the tempestuous social passions and visions aroused in [Pierre] would find an outlet” – “his only means of reconciling irreconcilable worlds,” in James, *Mariners, Renegades, and Castaways: The Story of Herman Melville and the World We Live In* (London: Allison and Busby, 1985), pp. 97–112.
58. Herman Melville, “Benito Cereno,” in *The Piazza Tales*, ed. Hayford et al. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press/Newberry Library, 1998), p. 46. All subsequent quotations will be given in parentheses.
59. James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*, Introduction and Notes by John McWilliams (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 298. Though Natty makes this pronouncement in the context of French-Indian alliance, readers will note that the Caribbean-born, mixed-race Cora speaks French, while Alice does not.
60. Child’s 1834 story “Joanna” has been considered “the female-authored origin of miscegenation literature”; see Werner Sollors’s discussion of Child’s work, including the New Orleans-set novel based on “The Quadroons,” *A Romance of the Republic* (1867) – a work replete with Franco-Africanist figures – within the historical development of interracial literature in *Neither Black Nor White Yet Both: Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 202–11, 293–94.
61. Gavin Jones, *Strange Talk: The Politics of Dialect Literature in Gilded-Age America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 115–33.
62. Kate Chopin, “Désirée’s Baby,” in Judith Baxter, ed., *The Awakening and Other Stories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 210.
63. Sarah Orne Jewett, “The Foreigner,” in *Sarah Orne Jewett: Novels and Stories* (New York: Library of America, 1994) pp. 533–34.
64. William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!* (New York: Random House, 1986), p. 302. Bongie gives a most illuminating reading of the historical and sociological context for Faulkner’s Haiti and New Orleans, arguing that the novel’s depiction of Haiti “offers not (just) the specter of black independence . . . but the even more threatening one of . . . the erasure of black and white as discrete identities”; see *Islands and Exiles*, pp. 189–217. See also Ramón Saldivar on the novel’s colonial narrative of permeable national and racial boundaries, “Looking for a Master Plan: Faulkner, Paredes, and the Colonial and Post-colonial Subject,” in Philip Weinstein, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to William Faulkner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 96–120.
65. William Wells Brown, *Clotel or, The President’s Daughter*, ed. Robert S. Levine (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s Press, 2000), p. 223.

66. The title of the revised version was *Clotelle: A Tale of the Southern States*. On Brown's use of Beard's history of the Haitian Revolution, as well as his own publications on Haiti, see Robert S. Levine's annotations to Brown, *Clotel*.
67. Frances E. W. Harper, *Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 117.
68. Walter White, *Flight* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998), p. 54.
69. Jessie Fauset, *Plum Bun: A Novel Without a Moral* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990), p. 37.
70. *Ibid.*, pp. 272, 352.
71. The poem appears in Faubert, *Ogé*, p. 145.
72. Dash discusses this passage briefly in *Haiti and the United States*, noting that "Faubert's fears were not unfounded [as] the threat of invasion or annexation grew steadily in the latter half of the nineteenth century" (p. 16).

EPILOGUE

1. Julia Alvarez, *In the Name of Salomé* (New York: Penguin Putnam/Plume, 2000), p. 14. All subsequent quotations will be from this edition and will be given in parentheses.
2. For a useful account of this history, see Frank Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic: A National History* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1998), esp. pp. 73–185.
3. As quoted by Ernesto Sagás in *Race and Politics in the Dominican Republic* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), p. 33.
4. G. Pope Atkins and Larman C. Wilson, *The Dominican Republic and the United States: From Imperialism to Transnationalism* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1998), p. 15.
5. See Atkins and Wilson, *The Dominican Republic and the United States*, pp. 49–50.
6. Pedro Henríquez-Ureña, *Literary Currents in Hispanic America*, The Norton Lectures (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945), p. 261.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 156–57.
9. John Edwin Fagg, *Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965), p. 162.
10. Henríquez-Ureña, *Literary Currents*, p. 155.

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